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The Significance for Us of the Life of Jesus

LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD



THE ABINGDON PRESS

New York

Cinnamati

Chicago

WEATHERHEAD
HIS LIFE AND OURS

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Printed in the United States of America

BOOKS BY LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD

HIS LIFE AND OURS
THE TRANSFORMING FRIENDSHIP
JESUS AND OURSELVES

DEDICATED TO
MY BELOVED PARENTS-IN-LAW
THE REV. AND MRS. ARTHUR TRIGGS
THROUGH WHOSE LIVES IN THE
EAST AND THE WEST MANY
HAVE SEEN CHRIST

School of Theology
at Claremont

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PREFACE

THIS book is not intended to be another in the long list of lives of Christ. It is, rather, an attempt to work out, in the light of the twentieth century, the significance for us to-day of the main happenings in that Life of lives and to express that significance as far as possible in ordinary, everyday language. The book is an attempt to bring to the surface some of the vast wealth of the unfathomable mine of the life of Jesus so as to enrich the poverty-stricken lives which most of us live.

The art of living is one we must all practice. Some feel that they are below deck. They can see no star worth steering by. The thrill of adventure never seizes heart and mind. They are not without courage, but it is the grim courage of the depressed and despairing who only keep on for the sake of self-respect. Life, for them, seems to hold little of purpose, beauty, or meaning. They suppose that one day the ship will go down and all will be over. They dream of no harbor safely reached at last and, beyond the harbor, a vast, new, enthralling continent waiting to be explored.

Others feel that the wheel is in their hands as they stand on the bridge. A Pilot whom they adore directs them. They love the adventure we call life. The zest of it is theirs. They love to feel the wind in their hair and the salt spray on their faces. They have set themselves a course. They know whom they have believed.

Never is the night so dark but they can see their Pilot's face. Through storm and tempest they go on, fearless and unafraid. They believe that if the ship breaks up and is destroyed, they themselves will be brought at last to the desired haven. Their strength is his grace. Their rule is his Word; the logbook of his earthly voyaging, who having sailed these seas before them, having learned its dangerous currents, its hidden rocks, its terrifying storms, now stands at their side ever ready to put his hand upon their wheel. Their end is his glory.

The excuse for this book is the hope that some mariner who for any of a thousand reasons has let go the wheel and gone below, may be persuaded to come up on deck again and face life with steady eyes, a quiet heart, and cool nerves, "looking unto Jesus," himself the Life and the Way to it, willing to live again his life in ours.

Before his death I promised the late Rev. Arthur Hird that I would send him a manuscript. This is the belated fulfillment of that promise. One of my strongest beliefs is that group fellowship is one of the ways of the Spirit of God for this age. The living and active Methodist Class Meeting, the Cambridge Groups, Oxford Groups, Student Movement Groups, "Swanick Groups" and movements like the Fellowship of the Kingdom are all straws on the surface which show in which direction the strong tides of the Spirit are flowing. Only a group must not be a mere discussion or debate. It will include these but it must include the sharing of experiences where such sharing would strengthen the fellowship or any member of it, even to the unveiling of the soul when God directs it

and the fellowship atmosphere makes it possible. Such fellowship must include the glad foregoing of prejudices, intolerances, and preconceived opinions as well as the dogmatic or imperious temper. It must regard as equally welcome the contribution of high and low, rich and poor, wise and ignorant. Above all its great aim must always be, "How can we deepen our experience of Christ and pass that experience on to others?"

To facilitate the working of such groups by shy or busy leaders each chapter is preceded by quotations which can be read to the group and prayers which can be used. Scripture passages are also suggested. Questions intended for discussion are included at the end.

Some chapters are necessarily longer than others. To attempt to think out the Incarnation or the Atonement makes a far greater demand on space and on mental concentration than to think out the significance of Christ's boyhood. The chapter on "Temptation" may well be almost purely devotional. The chapter on "Resurrection" cannot be this for many people until difficulties have been dealt with. Such difficulties cannot, in these days, be ignored. They must be met, even if inadequately. Some groups and private readers may prefer to omit the first and the fourteenth chapters on a first reading. I hope they will study them before they close the book.

My indebtedness to others is vast. I have tried to express it in footnotes as the book proceeds, but every life of Christ on which I have been able to lay hands has probably contributed something to my thinking, as have many theological works. I have sought permission to use the poems and prayers which are quoted. Where the authorship could not be traced, the words,

"Source Unknown," are printed. Prayers with no reference are the author's own.

Especially must I mention the Rev. J. Arundel Chapman, M.A., B.D., professor of theology at Hed-ingley Methodist College, Leeds. During the last three years he has given me, through conversation and discussion and lecture notes which I have been privileged to see, a vastly deeper conception of the person of Christ and shown me the inadequacy of the views I had previously held. He has read the manuscript and the proofs and made many valuable suggestions. I must also make mention of the painstaking work of my efficient secretary and friend, Miss E. M. Bailey, who has relieved me of much of the drudgery of producing a book.

LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD.

I

INCARNATION

The soft light from a stable door
Lies on the midnight lands;
The wise men's star burns evermore,
Over all desert sands.

Unto all peoples of the earth
A little Child brought light;
And never in the darkest place,
Can it be utter night.

No flickering torch, no wavering fire,
But Light the Life of men;
Whatever clouds may veil the sky,
Never is night again.

—*Lilian Cox.*

PRAYER

Our God, we who are poor and lowly are met to worship thee the High and Holy. Yet our minds are fearless and our hearts at rest, for in Christ, the holy Child, the Son of man, the Crucified, thou hast become to us Immanuel, God forever with us. . . .

We need not leave our homes to seek by starlight some far-off shrine, for the Babe is no longer Bethlehem's pride and Mary's joy, but the whole wide world's, and the blessed burden of every heart that makes him room.

Here we dedicate our rediscovered treasures, gold of royal love, frankincense of holy intercession, myrrh of healing sympathy, and bear them forth to bless all birth, and to make at every cradle a carol of welcome and a solemn service of the Christ. Amen.

—(From "*The Temple*," by W. E. Orchard. By permission of Messrs. J. Dent and Sons.)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 2; Luke 1. 26—2. 21; John 1. 1-18.

CHAPTER I

INCARNATION

DEVOUT men and women of all ages will kneel before the manger cradle of the Child Jesus. Indeed, the contemplation of any very little child induces that feeling of awe and wonder which is akin to reverence. Some of us have never known a more sacramental moment than the first moment when we held our own little child in our arms. It is not surprising, then, that when we pass, in imagination, into that lowly stable and see a tiny Baby asleep in a manger, a hush falls upon the spirit and tears are not far from the eyes.

The romance and poetry with which the birth-stories are surrounded heighten the effect on the religious faculties. The stories of the angels appearing to shepherds, of wise men wandering from distant Persia, of a star which stood over a stable, of the offering of symbolic gifts, gold for royalty, frankincense for Deity, myrrh for humanity, of the solemn words of Simeon—all these make the story of this birth the most beautiful one in the world. Such poetry and romance tend to silence the critical faculty. We have no experience of countless angels making the heaven more glorious than the moonlight which flooded the fields where shepherds watched over their flocks. We do not fathom that strange astrology which brought wise men from different starting points on a journey which must have taken them two full years. Nor do we understand how a star in the heavens can indicate

with any precision the location of a spot on earth. But whether we accept the stories as they stand or treasure their poetic significance, or whether we pass no judgment at all, matters very little. We know now that the birth has altered the whole course of subsequent history, that his name is stamped on each new year, that his influence is woven into the very texture of civilization, that his name is the most precious the world has ever known.

Yet I think, if we are honest-minded people, we must admit that the birth at Bethlehem owes its significance now to the fact that we read into it the content of events that came afterward and of thoughts not understood till after Jesus had passed from sight of men. This little Child is more to us than all children, round whose cradle we have ever stood, either in fact or imagination, simply because of what he afterward wrought for us.

Those mighty deeds, some of which we shall study, have fascinated the whole world ever since, and taxed the thought and faith of the learned and unlearned with the question his own men asked so long ago on the Galilæan lake, "What manner of man is this?"

Since this is a question which the learned fathers of the church have discussed, and about which they have differed for two thousand years, it will not, of course, be supposed that one brief chapter can survey the history of the doctrine of the person of Christ and pronounce upon the issue. What will be attempted is the statement of a point of view to which I have been brought by my own reading and study, a point of view which, I venture to think, is not out of harmony with modern thought in fields other than theological, nor

yet out of harmony with the teaching of the New Testament, always remembering that a tenacious adherence to his humanity does not lessen his deity and to claim deity for him does not rob him of perfect humanity.

In my own thinking I have found it most helpful to approach the subject from two different points of view—from the manward side and from the Godward side. There seem to be facts about Jesus which can be stated more clearly as we think of him as a Man, and facts, equally convincing, which seem to demand higher categories of thought from those which we use in regard to men. I shall state a point of view, the manward aspect, which to many will seem terribly incomplete. I hope they will be patient with me and read to the end.

For many, no doubt, the whole subject will be decided beforehand by their acceptance of the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus. "Why argue further?" they will say; "Jesus was 'conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.' His birth was a miracle. He had no human father. Birth came about by a special act of God himself of which Mary was given due notice and, from birth, Jesus was, in a literal and unique sense, the Son of God."

I am of the opinion that the virgin birth can be set on one side as not contributing to our understanding of the nature of Jesus. I am not setting it aside because it is difficult to reconcile with modern scientific ideas. As I hope to show later, one great heresy of a day of marvels like this is to say that because we do not understand a thing that therefore it could not happen. And to discuss the person of Jesus and to say

Note

that this or that is impossible because it is unparalleled is to show the simple spirit of an Arab sheik I once knew who was quite dogmatic that no message could reach Basrah from Baghdad faster than his swiftest horse could travel. If a claim is hard to reconcile with the knowledge we have now, it is permissible to leave it *sub judice*, and await fuller light. It is not permissible to label it impossible—so many “impossible” things are true.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the virgin-birth theory owed much of its appeal in early days, if not its origin, to the deeply implanted idea that the sex-act was in itself wicked. Compare psalm, “In sin did my mother conceive me,” etc. The theory avoids the thought that the birth of Jesus followed what was thought of as an act of sin. Behind most first-century thinking we find the idea of the evil of the flesh. To our way of thinking the reverse is true, and one of the glories of the incarnation is that in Jesus the flesh is made spiritual and the spiritual is made flesh. Jesus in his incarnation thus achieves victory at the point of man’s most crushing defeats.

I set the virgin birth on one side because, as I read the New Testament, its writers themselves do not attach any great importance to it or make deductions from it. Further, his person is not revealed by a miraculous entry into this world, but by his life in it and his reactions to it. For instance, if sinlessness be claimed for him, there seems to me no reason why a person should be sinless because he has one parent instead of two. We should need other evidence beside this.

The statement that the New Testament writers set

small store by the virgin birth needs some amplification. Consider then the following points:¹

1. Mark, Peter, Paul and "John" show no trace of a knowledge of it. Is it not fair to deduce that it is likely if they knew of it, they would mention it, and, at any rate, fair to say that if they deemed it important, they would have said so? Paul says that Jesus was "born of a woman, born under the law," and "born of the seed of David according to the flesh."² The fourth Gospel makes not only the Jews refer to Jesus as Joseph's son,³ but even Jesus' own followers do so.⁴

2. What point can there be in giving two genealogies of *Joseph*, as Matthew does, and showing by this means that Jesus was descended from David, if Joseph were not Jesus' father? The supposition that Mary was also of Davidic descent is pure speculation; and even if it were a fact, would it not have been simpler to give the genealogy of Mary? There is no point in giving a genealogy of Joseph if he were not the father of Jesus.

3. Doctor Cadoux and some other scholars believe that Luke 1. 34 and 35 are verses added later, to fit the growing belief of the church, a belief we may note as likely to arise concerning the birth of any remarkable person. If we take out these verses which do not do more than suggest a virgin birth, we are left with a Gospel which seems more consistent without them, since in Luke 2. 27 and 41-43 Joseph and Mary are referred to as the parents. In 2. 48 we read, "*Thy*

¹ I am indebted here to my friend Dr. Cecil J. Cadoux. See *Catholicism and Christianity*, pp. 349ff.

² Galatians 4. 4; Romans 1. 3.

³ John 6. 42; compare Matthew 13. 55.

⁴ John 1. 45.

father and I sought thee sorrowing," and in 4. 22, "Is not this Joseph's son?"⁵

4. The words of Matthew 1. 22-23 show the source of the supposed scriptural authority for the virgin birth. We remember how fond Matthew is of seeing everywhere a fulfillment of prophecy.⁶ Isaiah 7. 14 says, "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." As far as I am aware there is no suggestion that Isaiah was suggesting that the child should have no father. It is supposed that the Septuagint translators in the second century translated this Hebrew word, which simply means a mature young woman, into the Greek "virgin" (*παρθένης*), so that the passage would support a belief arising in the church which had no currency until then, and even then was not a universal belief.

I am not here arguing that the virgin birth must be dismissed as impossible. Those who care to do so must study the subject for themselves and come to their own conclusion.⁷ I am arguing that the New Testament writers do not evidently regard it as fundamental, base nothing upon it, and do not use it to cast light on the person of Jesus.

Setting it, therefore, for the moment on one side, I ask myself what exactly is my own answer to the ques-

⁵ On the other hand, it is suggested that in a second edition of his Gospel Saint Luke added references to the virgin birth because in the meantime he had learned the facts from the mother of Jesus.

⁶ Compare "Out of Egypt have I called my son," which in Hosea 11. 1, refers to the Exodus of the people under Moses, but which Matthew (2. 15) makes reference to the Child Jesus returning from Egypt, whence he was taken to avoid the wrath of Herod.

⁷ I suggest the following: Cecil J. Cadoux, *Catholicism and Christianity*, pp. 348-362. Vincent Taylor, *The Virgin Birth*. James Orr, *The Virgin Birth*. W. E. Orchard, *Foundations of Faith*, Vol. II, p. 113. Bishop Gore, *Belief in Christ*. Bethune Baker, *The Faith of the Apostles' Creed*, pp. 66-110. H. R. Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*.

tion, "What manner of man is this?" and I first endeavor to answer it by looking at it from the manward side.

We watch the life of a little Jewish boy growing up into adolescence and we note that the heartbreaking scantiness of the material reveals at least that he is a very devout religious genius. He was probably recognized as this very early in Nazareth days. Religion is the passion of his soul. He revels in "the things of his Father."⁸ Already God is not merely like a Father. God is a Father. At any rate in some sense, he thinks of himself already as God's Son. Looking at his life from this angle he seems to say "Yes" to God when we so often say "No."

What happens? I suggest this line of approach: Jesus perfectly responded to God on the one hand and to sin on the other. Quick to perceive moral values, he lived so near to God that he always knew how God would have him act and speak and think, and, as far as others had power to perceive, he always did his Father's will. Because of this he rose to a moral attitude, lonely and unshared, unsurpassed by any other before or since. Having reached that level by human achievement, he increasingly knew that an endowment of God was his, an entry of God into his life which put him in a different category even from the greatest saints. It is this achievement side of Christ's development which Mr. John Middleton Murry stresses. "Jesus' profoundest teaching," he says,⁹ "is no less than that man must *be* God. . . . Even to-day there are only two things that can be believed about

⁸ Luke 2. 49.

⁹ *Life of Jesus*, p. 196.

Jesus by those who can see the facts at all. Either Jesus was God made man, or he was man made God. It is easier and less exacting to believe the former: but the latter is the truth! I try to show in this essay that both these supposed alternatives are included in my view of the person of Christ.¹⁰

Let me suggest a parallel. We are animals. On occasion we manifest this fact unmistakably. At our best, instincts function within us which we have taken over from the animals. But by a process which has taken centuries we have become something else. This process ended in our becoming capable of receiving that gift of self-consciousness which made us men. We can laugh, worship, and reason. We know, and know that we know. The word "animal" is no longer enough. The climax to this process is partly due to the courage of our ancestors. It is partly something done for us from above. Those two sentences need amplifying.

"At every stage of evolution," said Miss Lily Don-gall,¹¹ "nature has, so to say, put out an advertisement: 'Wanted, a number of combative folk prepared for adventure at all costs.' She did this when all the little life-germs in the warm mud were hesitating as to whether they would go in search of food or wait for it, and those who answered the advertisement became the ancestors of the animal world. Some of the water lizards who responded took to the dry land, some, later to the air, and became the parents of the animal and the bird. Each advance was made at the risk of life

¹⁰ Compare also Streeter, in *Reality*, pp. 178ff. "Man's divinity is a thing that he must win."

¹¹ *God and the Struggle for Existence*, p. 87.

and was always a great adventure, a great achievement. The first mother who went hungry to linger over the care of her child a day longer than necessary had answered the same advertisement, and the first ape who risked his standing in his tribe for a new idea became the father of men." There is an achievement side of evolution.

At the same time I think no scientist would deny that another element enters in. Supposing some wise scientist could have stood outside the process of evolution, knowing all the factors in the situation before men became, and living through all the æons during which one thing became another. Would he have been able to forecast what would happen? Studying vegetation, would he have predicted animal life? Studying the animals, would he have foreseen that human civilization would emerge? Would he have been able to say, "This process can only have one conclusion, the creation of man with a conscious and self-conscious mind"? I think not. There is surely a miracle in evolution—that one thing should become another thing with entirely new powers. However we emphasize the gradual nature of the process, there are points in the process at which new things emerge. Why should unself-conscious life become self-conscious however long the process? May we not say that God rewards achievement by entering into life at certain points with a gift not otherwise attainable? This is not to be called divine intervention, for the whole process is divine. Nor is there denial of continuity. "Within the space-time frame there is a record of progressive development from the atom to the saint." At the same time there are stages of emergence. "At each of these a

new substance, not merely the resultant of the sum of that stuff and unpredictable before the event, emerges." "If an impartial historical survey should lead to the conclusion that the nisus toward Deity has culminated in one unique individual, there is, so far as I can see, nothing in the naturalistic interpretation of emergent evolution which precludes the acceptance of this conclusion."¹²

That is the substance of my theme about the human approach to the incarnation, though I shall need to work it out far more fully and try to face the difficulties of the situation. Jesus the boy and youth lived a life rich in spiritual achievement. He responded to all the meanings and purposes and challenges of God. Therefore God highly exalted him with an inpouring of himself not effected at a given moment but only able to be consciously realized because of what had been achieved, an inpouring which carried him beyond the place reachable by achievement, so that now the word "humanity," though eternally true concerning him, is not adequate. We need another word—the word "Deity."¹³

If you ask me when did this happen, I shall ask permission to postpone the answer to the third section of the essay. I think he knew it had happened before he was baptized.

What are the marks of this Deity? Some will reply at once, "The miracles." My own reply would be that

¹² Charles E. Raven, *The Creator Spirit*, pp. 81-85; and Lloyd Morgan, in *Emergent Evolution*, p. 31. Compare Archbishop Temple, *Christian Faith and Life*, pp. 29-30.

¹³ I use the word "Deity" rather than "divinity" because the latter is more ambiguous and is more loosely used. Both mean worthy of worship. The word "Deity" to me connotes perfect power, perfect wisdom, perfect goodness.

the miracles, which we shall discuss later, demand, certainly, supernormal power but not Deity. Some of them, indeed, can now be performed by people whom we are not likely to suppose divine.¹⁴ Indeed, as Doctor Orchard once rather frivolously remarked, "If I saw someone walking on the sea, I should not say, 'This man is divine'; I should say, 'Excuse me, do you mind doing that again? I didn't see how you did it.' " Deity is not necessarily seen in the marvelous deed.

Jesus is a perfect revelation of God. When we say this, we do not mean that God has no properties which we do not see in Jesus. It means that Jesus reveals as much of the nature of God as men are capable of apprehending. There are sounds which we never hear. They are either too high or too low for the register of the human ear. There are colors which we do not perceive to be such. We speak of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. Beyond that spectrum, either way, we have no perception of color. We talk of, and even use, infra-red rays at the one end and ultra-violet at the other, but no one has ever *seen* either. Jesus is the spectrum of God. There are glories in God's nature which we guess at and on which we rely—omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence. No man has ever apprehended what these words really involve. The being of God is beyond us. But all that we are capable of apprehending Jesus reveals to us.

Then is his nature no different from ours? In a

¹⁴ John 5. 8: "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." (See Matthew 9. 6; Mark 2. 11.) Compare the interpretation of this miracle in Micklem's *Miracles and the New Psychology*, pp. 85ff.

sense, says the reader, every man is an incarnation of God. Is his difference from us merely one of degree? My own answer is that at present he differs from us in kind, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. It may be the purpose of God that he shall inpour us so that we shall ultimately differ from him only in degree.

This seems to me to have been the view of some writers in the New Testament. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. He is the first-born of many brothers, and it is difficult to see how he can be truly a brother if *forever* he is different from what we may become.

It may be that the purpose of God is that in Jesus we should behold his ultimate purpose for every man. That, if the words may be allowed, at a certain point of moral achievement, only reached so far by Jesus, it should be possible for God to fill a human life in a way that raises it to what we have to call some subordinate kind of Deity; that God's ultimate purpose is to make all men like Jesus without violating or coercing their personality; to make beings fit to have communion with him on the same plane of existence, and in Jesus the ultimate purpose of God in endless æons has broken through giving us some glimpse in time of an eternal purpose. That "men should be as gods" was the dream of man in the legend of paradise,¹⁵ but it is not a prize to be snatched at; it is given only at a certain point of moral excellence, or, if eternally given, only at that point claimable. This does seem a worthy climax to the story of human life, a

¹⁵ Genesis 3. 4.

conclusion in which the mind which contemplates human history can rest.¹⁶

"Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ."

Some thinkers hold, of course, that he is different from us now only in degree. They admit that the degree is so vast that it approximates to a difference in kind. Some differences in kind are less marked differences than some differences in degree. I held this view myself for some time. It seemed the only view which did not take Jesus away from me. I clung to one who was tempted in all points as I am and used no weapons save those which, at any rate, I could reach.

I want to safeguard this, but I can only say that, after desperate efforts during ten years' thinking to push my thought of him into a merely human category, he simply won't fit. Let us consider the following points:

1. The Jews were strictly monotheists. That was the glory of their faith and the quality which so definitely distinguished it from all surrounding cults. Judaism rose with its strict monotheism, and its proud emphasis on moral values as a pure lotus lily lifts its head from the filthy pool in which it has its roots. The disciples were all Jews. The thought of worshipping anyone other than God was blasphemous and abhorrent to them. But gradually Jesus changed that. I do not

¹⁶ That this was Browning's thought I have tried to show in *The Afterworld of the Poets*, pp. 207ff., where numerous passages expressing this idea are quoted. The mind can rest, of course, also in the thought of the soul of man absorbed in the Deity and losing its identity, but such an idea of Nirvana has little appeal in the West.

¹⁷ "Rabbi Ben Ezra," xiii.

know whether they ever stopped to ask whether their theology had become dualistic, but, in a beautiful phrase of Doctor Maltby, when they said their prayers to God at night, there was another face on the screen of their mind and they fell asleep thinking of Jesus. Later we read, "And they worshiped him." Those words are significant enough. But there is something more significant. *He accepted their worship as his right.* As far as I know in the days of his flesh they did not do this. It may be that he would have repudiated it then.¹⁸ Not till after death and resurrection was he the fully manifested Christ, and until then he may not have fully realized what he himself was. Even the knowledge he possessed of his own nature was the knowledge of faith. But they worshiped him after the resurrection.¹⁹ Nor did he say them nay. Either, then, he was worshipful or he was not honest with them. Save by impossibly bursting the records I see no way out of that dilemma. And a person who is rightly worshiped is entitled to a higher word than "humanity." I cannot forget that an early rumor of Christianity that reached the pagan world was that of Jews who sang hymns to Christ as God.²⁰ By what device can we avoid or explain away the fact that the disciples, monotheists to a man, without hesitation asked the world to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God from all eternity, and did so, not in the spirit of those

¹⁸ Compare "Why callest thou me good?" Though this is probably an ascription to God as the Author and Source of all good. One is sure that this is not an admission of sin on the part of Jesus. If so, the words he used would not be so ambiguous and casual.

¹⁹ Compare Acts 1. 24 and 7. 59; 1 Corinthians 1. 2; 2 Corinthians 12. 8; Revelation 5. 13; John 14. 13; Revelation 22. 20. Doctor Temple calls Acts 7. 59 "a devotional equation of Jesus with the God of the Spirits of all flesh." *Christus Veritas*, p. 108.

²⁰ Letter of Pliny to Trajan, 112 A. D.

who by authority inflict dogma upon others but as those who have made a triumphant discovery in their own experience?

2. Again he seems to have had no sense of sin.²¹ I should not personally suggest that there were no childish misdemeanors. Indeed, I cherish the hope that he got into mischief and kept Joseph awake at night, as I have been kept awake by children whose divinity is not in question. But his attitude toward sin is certainly different from that of the world's greatest moral teachers. Mr. Middleton Murry²² suggests that Jesus sinned, but our spiritual perception is too dull to distinguish what he calls "sin" from what we should call goodness. We are too myopic to see such fine distinctions, and all he did appears to us as good. At the baptism, Mr. John Middleton Murry thinks, Jesus made an act of penitence for past sin. We shall discuss this in speaking of his baptism. I should be attracted by this idea, which is admittedly a speculation about Jesus, but for one fact.

If we have had a fall we cannot possibly speak as if we had not. Our attitude toward another who falls is, rather, "God has saved me, he can save you." There is nothing like this about Jesus. He seems to stand apart from sin in a way which is either dishonest or merited. When ye pray, say, "Forgive us our debts . . . " and,²³ according to the fourth Gospel, he said, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?"²⁴ "On every page of the Gospel we encounter such imperial demands for obedience, as well as gracious promises

²¹ John 3. 5.

²² *Life of Jesus*, p. 31.

²³ Matthew 6. 12.

²⁴ John 8. 46.

of help and pardon, as it would have been an enormity for a sinful man to utter."²⁵

Further, his enemies accuse him of many things. They accuse him of eating *with* publicans and sinners. They never even insinuate that he was one of them. He was friendly with women even of doubtful reputation. But they draw no vile deductions. His portrait is painted by four men of different outlook and make-up. All of them are brought up in the tradition. "There is none righteous, no not one." Yet none of them as much as hints at a flaw. What they do charge him with is that he made himself equal with God.²⁶

But speaking of his relation to sin, there is a more impressive line of thought still. When the prophet Isaiah saw a vision of the glory of God, he was at once overwhelmed with a sense of his own uncleanness. "Woe is me! . . . because I am a man of unclean lips."²⁷ When Saint Paul stands on one of the heights of spiritual progress, he is more than ever conscious of the beastliness of his sins. They are as revolting to him as a corpse strapped to a prisoner's back by a pagan and terrible custom. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"²⁸ is his cry. When the saintly John Wesley was within sight of death, he said,

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

We perceive a principle here. The nearer the saint gets to God, the more conscious is he of his sins; the nearer the white of God, the blacker they appear.

²⁵ H. R. Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 36.

²⁶ John 5. 18; 10. 23.

²⁷ Isaiah 6. 5.

²⁸ Romans 7. 24.

But this is not true of Jesus. He who so searchingly spoke of sin made no confession or admission of it himself, and when he ascends to the pinnacle of communion with God, where we should be humbled to the dust, he is represented as saying in the loftiest moment of prayer,²⁹ "I and the Father are one."³⁰ The disciples represented Jesus as sinless. Could they have done so if that had not been their conviction after living with him? Could they have done so in defiance of better knowledge?

3. There is another most striking thing which distinguishes Jesus from all the teachers and all the saints. It is his emphasis on himself. Is it not true that the great teacher says nothing of himself? Plato and Aristotle point us to beauty and to truth. Moses and Isaiah point away from themselves to God. John the Baptist and Paul point to Christ. Is not a person in a different category from all other men who says, "I am the light of the world," "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"? who quietly puts Moses on one side with his word, "But *I* say unto you"? who says the world is well lost if he be gained, and that neither father nor mother nor lands nor possession, nor life itself, must stand before loyalty to him? who having told men that they must not judge one another, says that men will be judged in the world to come by their attitude to him? who speaks with a kind of finality never suggesting, as does the Baptist, that his work will be complete by any who

²⁹ John 17.

³⁰ John 10. 30. Even if this be interpreted "one in purpose," it is striking, and though we may not quote the fourth Gospel for the actual words of Jesus, the idea is too revolutionary to have had its origin with any but him.

should follow? What kind of humanity is this? It would be intolerable egotism in another, however saintly. Yet in him it seems natural, and, indeed, inevitable, and entirely in harmony with One who was meek and lowly in heart.

4. Further we must note his unique appeal to the world. All other great teachers require the student to understand their setting and thus get their point of view. Mohammed, for instance, has never touched furthest north, nor furthest south, furthest east nor furthest west. He only fits into one setting. Now, Jesus fits into that setting so well that Mohammedanism has invited him to be a Mohammedan. But he fits into every setting. He is everybody's Christ. I have had the privilege of preaching about Jesus to some who had previously never heard him preached. I shall never forget the impression I got then of talking about Someone who was *recognized*. As an Indian once said to a missionary, "I have known him all my life, and now you have told me his name."

Now, this is a most remarkable thing. We say of an Irishman, "He's Irish," as if that absolves us from the attempt to understand him. Jesus was a Jew. Yet that is the last thing anyone ever thinks of concerning him. He has been preached north, south, east, and west, and never has any son of man felt that because Jesus was a Jew he could not understand him or be understood by him. There is something unique here. There is something eternal that transcends race and time. What missionary starts teaching Jesus by giving a background picture of Palestine in the first century? Yet of whom else can we teach without this? The missionary starts with a Jesus who is knowable as any

member of the same race and period as his audience, and he finds no difficulty. African Bushmen, Indian outcastes who have never heard of Jesus, know him as their daily Companion. He is no foreigner to them. It was so in the days of his flesh. A Jew talking to a Samaritan—what a scandal! A Jewish *man* talking to a Samaritan *woman*—what an outrage! A Jewish rabbi talking to a Samaritan prostitute—incredible! But the disciples find a Samaritan woman of no reputation in the most intimate conversation with Jesus. A Syrophœnician woman, another foreigner, finds no problem at all.

Think, on the other hand, of a man like Gandhi, a man, as I think, of almost stainless character, at whose feet anyone could profitably sit and whose spirit we could all profitably emulate. I know of no more saintly man in the world to-day. But I don't understand him. He is alive as I write this, but he is not as knowable as Jesus who died two thousand years ago. I know his background, his aims, the story of his life. I admire him. I know many admirable things about Mr. Gandhi. I know nothing against his moral character, but he does not step out of place and time and hold and arrest and captivate my whole spirit as Jesus does. There is a difference which I can call no longer a mere difference of degree. Charles Lamb's saying is well worn but it expresses the difference: "If Shakespeare came into this room now, we should all rise to our feet, but if Jesus came into this room, we should all go down on our knees and try to kiss the hem of his robe."

Viewing Christ's person from the human approach, the fact which we most need to safeguard in practical

Christian living, is, I think, that Jesus was so truly human that he was really tempted. I think that without doubt Jesus was tempted at all points of his nature "as we are, yet without sin." At the same time two claims made on his behalf seem now to me unwarrantable. They are generally made carelessly without their implication being realized. The first is that Jesus experienced all the temptations which assail us. This, of course, could not have been so. Even I am not tempted to get drunk or to steal a man's possessions or to assault a child. Many temptations which assail me would utterly pass him by. But higher in the spiritual scale more subtle and terrifying temptations than I have ever known assailed him. A person is most subtly tempted at the point of his greatest power. Victor over those, he is *more* able to understand mine and help me win my lower-grade victories. Martineau said that sin is unique in the universe in that the more we practiced it, the less we knew its nature and power. But it is often overlooked that the reverse is true. The less we practice it, the more we see it for what it is and realize its dire power and consequence. Jesus can come nearer to a sinner than a fellow sinner. He knows more about sin.³¹ The second claim sometimes made is that Jesus had no advantage over us. I think that there is a sense in which that was true. There were no weapons in his armory which we cannot reach. He had to use his will and exert his powers of self-control. But to say he had no advantage over us is to say that a master of the violin like Kreisler has no advantage over any man who wants to play the instrument.

³¹ Compare the chapter on "The Sympathy of Jesus," in my book, *Jesus and Ourselves*.

Kreisler has a gift, given from above, the full value of which his achievement allowed him to express. Some are born with a physical constitution so strong that germs of disease never disable them. There are men living who have never been ill. I think we are driven to the conclusion that the original spiritual constitution of Jesus was so strong that in adolescence and young manhood seeds of evil which germinate in us so readily and later bring forth fruit found no suitable environment, found, indeed, a completely effective resistance.³² Life is full of the advantages some have over others, and nature herself does not dole out her gifts with that strict impartiality which some would demand. At the same time, as a friend once said to me: "I don't resent So and So having advantages I do not possess if he puts them at my disposal! I am then glad that he does possess them." I agree. Where is the student of violin playing who would cry out that it wasn't fair that Kreisler had so many advantages over him, if Kreisler offered to teach him to play the violin? And does not the illustration apply? "Being tempted, . . . he is able to succor them that are tempted." True, he stands above me. But it is to lift me up so that where he is I may be also. This is not "unfair." This is the only star in my sky. He had a gift. Putting it at its lowest, he was a religious genius. Putting it at its highest, in a unique sense, different in kind from all other men he is the Son of God. But what if all he is, is at my disposal?

"Thou art Wisdom, Power, and Love.
And all thou art is mine."

³² Compare Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-14.

We now turn to the task of viewing the person of Jesus from the Godward side. We looked at it from the human angle, asking whether he could be understood in terms of a human life. We found that the word "human" was not big enough to include all that, on the evidence of the Gospels, he was and is. Now we try to look at him from the Godward angle, and then we must try to see whether or not these two can be harmonized.

Orthodoxy invites us to think of One who shared the glory of God before the world was; who is held to be the second Person in a sacred Trinity of three who are in a unique sense one. He possessed all the attributes of God. The need of the world called for a great act of sacrifice and compassion. This was met by his emptying himself "of all but love," and taking our flesh. He took our flesh and identified himself with us forever. God became Man: a Man who was truly tempted, who knew hunger and thirst, loneliness and disappointment—in whom, indeed, it may be said that Deity was generally subconscious:³³ a Man who voluntarily went to death, who rose from the dead, and, the great work of redemption completed, resumed the full life of the Godhead.

Such, I hope, is not a travesty of orthodox theology. We note the tremendous assertions it makes. It involves a way of thinking about God which involves at least two persons within the Godhead. It involves the pre-existence of Christ. It involves the view that God entering human life could renounce some of the char-

³³ Doctor Sanday first put forward this view in *Christologies Ancient and Modern* (1910), and modified it in *Personality in Christ and Ourselves* (1911).

acteristics of Deity and leave a human life undisrupted and truly human.³⁴

We must consider these points, however inadequately, and remember that after the ascension men must have puzzled their brains to try to think out the problem of his person, but they would never have made the amazing assumptions referred to above unless they had been driven to do so by what he had said or done; and, further, when they had done so—as far as the apostles were concerned—there was no violent disagreement. It is to me very significant that the Christology of Saint Paul, brought up a rigid monotheist, and that of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews—one of the earliest pieces of systematic theology in the early church—were, as far as we know, never questioned.

Note

Let us look at the assumptions of the early church about the person of Jesus in the order set out above.

1. They feel that it is necessary, in order to explain Jesus adequately, to posit that the nature of God is such that more than one Person operates and lives within the Godhead. Already we have indicated what a revolutionary idea that was (page 27).

I am not going to discuss here the doctrine of the Trinity, partly because it would take me wide of my mark and partly because I have never seen any putting of this doctrine which satisfies me,³⁵ and I am incapable

³⁴ Psychological study leads me to think that a great strain must sometimes have been placed on Jesus in feeling aware of such terrific forces within him and yet the necessity of human restraint. Perhaps the "strong crying and tears" (Hebrews 5. 7) on various occasions are witnesses to this fact.

³⁵ The reader may be directed to L. S. Thornton, in *The Incarnate Lord*, p. 413 (Longmans, Green & Co.) or to Archbishop Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p. 274.

of setting one forth. Probably it will always be beyond the human mind to understand the whole nature of God. That feeling was alive in the early church. We must remember that the doctrine of the Trinity was not set down by those who supposed they could express the truth about God in adequate language. It was set down to rebut still less effective ways of describing the nature of God.³⁶ It was set down as being better than silence. "The answer 'Three Persons' is given," said Augustine,³⁷ "not that it may be spoken but that it may not be left unspoken." I follow John Wesley at least here. "I dare not insist," he said, "upon anyone using the word 'Trinity' or 'Person.' I use them myself without any scruple because I know of none better."

Personally, if I were asked if I believed in the Trinity, I would rather keep silent. I neither believe it nor disbelieve it, but I assent to it only because I cannot conceive of any more satisfactory way of thinking about God. Further, one cannot make a close study of the human personality for long without being very deeply impressed by its complexity. Apart from the study of dissociated personalities,³⁸ a so-called normal mind is of almost endless complexity. Think of the difference between the mind of an ant and the mind of Sir Oliver Lodge. Yet we know little enough of the complexity of the former, let alone the latter. So what of the mind and being of God? I offer no neat theory of the latter. I don't believe it is in man's power to make one. Therefore I cannot rule out the thought that the rich complex nature of God may be less erro-

³⁶ Arianism and Sabellianism.

³⁷ *Concerning the Trinity*, V, p. 9.

³⁸ Compare Morton Prince, *The Dissociation of a Personality*.

neously described as containing two or more Persons than as containing one. "The history of thought has proved the worthlessness of a conception of God which pictures him as a bare single isolated unit of Deity. . . . The Trinitarian idea at least rejects the audacious yet contemptible illusion that we have fathomed or surrounded God by our eager cogitations."³⁹ "Dangerous it were," says Hooker,⁴⁰ "for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High, whom, although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his name, yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as, indeed, he is, neither can know him. Our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence when we confess without confession that his glory is inexplicable, his greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above, and we upon earth, therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few."

Suppose, accepting the existence of a second and subordinate⁴¹ Person within the Godhead, we pass to the second supposition—that of pre-existence. Here it seems important to me to avoid confusion of thought. If the existence is accepted, then the pre-existence of this second Person in the Trinity we may take as axiomatic. Not so the personality of that God-Man whom we worship as Jesus Christ. The Saviour of the world was not the second Person of the Trinity but was that august Being made man in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ not only had human flesh but also those non-material elements of mind and will which make up human personality and which came to him from Mary,

³⁹ Mackintosh, *The Person of Christ*, p. 518.

⁴⁰ *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. I, Chap. II, Sec. 3, p. 201, 7th ed.

⁴¹ The subordination of the Son to the Father is taught in the New Testament. John 14. 28; 1 Corinthians 15. 24-28.

his mother. The God-*Man* therefore could not have existed before Jesus was born. "The incarnation was effected not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of Manhood into God."⁴² To speak, therefore, of the pre-existence of the human Jesus seems to me confusing unless we mean the sense in which some believe in the pre-existence of all men.

Nor is any claim made in the New Testament for the pre-existence of the God-*Man*. The amazing Logos doctrine of John is a claim for the pre-existence of a second Person in the Godhead. When this Person entered human life there was a New Creation. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory. *Jesus*, the God-*Man* never taught his own pre-existence. "There is no evidence for it [the pre-existence of *Jesus*] in the Synoptics; that is, there is no evidence for it at all, for Paul's belief in it is clearly an inference from the Messiahship and not based on anything *Jesus* did."⁴³ I think it is important to distinguish between the existence of the second Person in the Godhead and the God-*Man* who resulted from the entry of that Person into human life.

Such a distinction does not detract, but to my mind enhances all those values in the devotional life which an indiscriminating belief in the pre-existence of *Jesus* offers.

1. It preserves the rich thought that God really did give himself to us in order that he might redeem us. God *so* loved the world that he gave his only begotten

⁴² Archbishop Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p. 140. The Macmillan Company.

⁴³ Cecil J. Cadoux, *Catholicism and Christianity*, p. 222. (George Allen and Unwin.) Doctor Cadoux also examines the phrase "Son of man; the Greek aorist ἐδόκησα in the words *Jesus* heard at baptism and the two passages Matthew 23. 34 and Luke 11. 49.

Son. He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich. I will withstand the temptation to linger on that rich treasure in the gospel message.

2. It makes it easier to understand the august and majestic assertions of Jesus. It is better to exclude the sayings only reported in the fourth Gospel, since they may not be Christ's actual words. Rather than reported utterance they are the result of a devout and reverent mind reproducing the mind of Christ in words colored by the writer's own meditations. Let this be conceded. But let us not imagine a writer with a wild, unschooled imagination setting forth, for the early church, fantastic theories which have no basis whatever in what was heard or seen.⁴⁴ And let us not imagine a writer with spiritual insight greater than his master. If the author of the fourth Gospel concocted the fourteenth chapter out of nothing that Christ said or did, he is another Jesus. Frankly, it is incredible that a Christian, writing so late, should dare to take liberties with the mind of Jesus.

Listen to these words (8. 23ff.): "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world. . . . I speak the things which I have seen with my Father. . . . I came forth and am come from God; . . . he sent me. . . . Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Can anyone suppose those ideas, if not words, did not come from Jesus? Who is this genius who invented words which made

⁴⁴I John 1.3, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

his Master appear ridiculous? Again: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (17. 5).

But we are not dependent only on the fourth Gospel. Listen to these verses from Saint Luke (10. 21ff.). Paralleled in Matthew 11. 25ff., the most important for Christology in the New Testament:

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

"All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

"And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

"For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."⁴⁵

We may say, of course, that a religious genius knows God better than anyone else, and may speak with authority, but is there not an eternal as well as a unique relationship expressed in the sentence, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father"? And what shall we make of the sentence, "Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not

⁴⁵ Note the significance of the word "ye" in this passage. Jesus does not use the word "we."

seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them"? I once heard Professor Chapman draw an impressive contrast. Suppose we take it for granted that Shakespeare was the greatest master of drama who ever lived. Can we think of him gathering lesser dramatic artists round him and saying to them: "You are very fortunate to see a thing like this. Many great artists would have given anything for your privilege, but it was denied them." Is there not here by implication an eternal relationship? Very slowly, seeking in vain for a more humanistic explanation, I have been brought to think it is.

3. This idea of the entry of the second Person into human life in Jesus Christ further preserves the truth which the Kenotic theories sought to establish. The idea of *kenosis*, or self-emptying, had its origin in Paul's great statement in the letter to the Philippians (2. 6-7), "Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." The expression "self-emptying" is not one we should use to-day. We cannot think of a person by an act, unknowing that which had been known. But it is not so difficult to think that when God entered this human life and Jesus Christ became, there were qualities which human nature could not be made to express. We are familiar in these days with the fact that sunlight is robbed of the powerful ultra-violet rays if it be passed through ordinary glass. Something in the nature of that glass prevents the ultra-violet ray from getting through. It is not so difficult to believe that although in Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, there were yet restrictions in

human personality which prevented everything in Deity from finding full expression. Psychology is not strange to the knowledge that there dwells in a human mind much that *never*, because of some restriction or other, finds conscious expression. People may even *know* things deeply in the unconscious mind, but that knowledge may never rise to consciousness. Many elements in Deity may, in the mind of Christ, have remained in the unconscious. It is, to me, no difficulty that his conscious knowledge on many matters was that of any other educated man of his day, or that in some things⁴⁶ he was mistaken. This is only evidence of a real humanity expressed through a real mind. It is not a denial that there are ultra-violet rays in sunlight to find none inside a greenhouse. The things concerning which his knowledge was that of other men are relatively subordinate details. All knowledge of God which can pass through the medium of the human mind he possessed, and in that sense he was *spiritually* omniscient.

4. The idea of the entry of the second Person of the Trinity into human life further lights up the subordination of the Son to the Father. It is therefore less confusing to think of Jesus as the Son of God rather than as God. Jesus prayed to his Father. It is difficult to many minds to think, say, of the prayer in Gethsemane as that of God to God. Whatever the metaphysical relation between the second and first Persons of the Trinity before the incarnation, when


⁴⁶ Compare the suggestion that he was mistaken anent the authorship of Psalm 110, which Jesus ascribes to David and which Gore, Driver, Kirkpatrick, and others deny. That Jesus was omnipotent or omniscient no responsible theologian claims. Jesus did not make such claims himself. Compare Mark 6. 5; 13. 32. Compare Luke 22. 42.

the second Person of the Trinity entered human life and Jesus became, there was definitely a subordination, and this fact is widely recognized in the New Testament.

The reader may think that this putting of the matter from the Godward side seems to contradict what was said when the manward side was discussed. If God, that entity within the Godhead which theology calls the second Person of the Trinity, entered human life and was made man in Jesus Christ, what becomes of the achievement which made conscious the endowment of which we spoke above? And what becomes of the suggestion that while we are *now* different in kind from Jesus, he may represent what God purposes for us all. Let us turn to these questions.

We supposed that there was something of moral achievement and something of endowment, and we cited the illustration of emergent evolution. I feel sure we must leave a place for moral achievement. Not to do so would be to make Jesus essentially incapable of any moral lapse and immune from temptation, and so not really human.

What, then, of that endowment which we called an "inpouring of God" which such achievement made possible? Let me suggest a parallel. Here is a young musician, ardent, accomplished, keen. He practices assiduously, studying every branch of his subject, sitting at the feet of the doctors of music. There is a gradual achievement and conquest. Then, in a moment of intense inspiration, he composes a piece of music which is far, far different from anything he had written before. It makes his name. He is famous forever. But what does he say about it? What does the world



say? It was *inspired*: breathed in from without, not breathed out from within. God gave it him. It was an endowment, yet not so much "there" suddenly and not there before. The musician knows that he has overheard something that was eternally there, but he had never been capable of hearing it before. Achievement made him capable of appropriating something that was there.

May it not have been so with the Master? The second Person of the Trinity—or, in simpler language, God himself—was a Gift eternally given. But achievement alone made Jesus capable of appropriating it. The endowment was realized only by a slowly awakening spiritual sensitiveness which gradually recognized something there from the beginning. The unique gift of God to human nature was gradually received as the consciousness developed that it had been given. The thought falls on the mind with a chill like the chill of death that Jesus, by yielding to temptation, might have made impossible the incarnation of God which means so much to the world. Instead of that this great Musician, learning obedience by the things he suffered, gave himself utterly so that the Gift eternally given might be made manifest. The world heard the music of Heaven, and the word "sound" is insufficient to convey the thought.

So Abt Vogler through the medium of sound reached something that was greater than sound—a star. An insight into the nature of ultimate reality flashed into his inner being, having been made possible by the long and patient training. Alas that it did not come in terms of art, for then he could have painted it and had it as a permanent possession. But having come in terms of

sound, it passed and left him in a great silence, unable to recapture it. He speaks of the palace of sound built up by musical ability, but then something else is added:

"But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
 Existent behind all laws, that made them; and, lo they are!
 And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
 That out of three sounds he frame, *not a fourth sound, but
 a star.*"⁴⁷

In Christ we have a Bright and Morning Star, a burning and a shining light, not yet at its zenith, forever to be seen of them that seek God. "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."⁴⁸

The other question that remains is whether any other Son of man will be indwelt by God. When we looked at this from the human viewpoint, it seemed a conclusion in which the mind could rest. When we look at it from the Godward aspect, it seems far more remote. The purpose of the incarnation has been accomplished. One speculates that no one else while still in the flesh will be a perfect revelation of God. The line between Creator and creature may never be crossed again. Nor is it easy to think that we shall ever be fit objects of worship. Yet if God entered our life as he did in Jesus, we should be objects of worship to those who could be adequately described as only human. This is speculation with little present value, but it may be the ultimate destiny of man, a destiny which is more lofty than the alternative, a family of

⁴⁷ Browning, "Abt Vogler," VII.

⁴⁸ Isaiah 60. 2-3.

perfected human creatures. Some words of Luther support more strongly than any other language I know the speculation that man's ultimate destiny may be a species of subordinate Deity similar to Christ. Dr. H. R. Mackintosh says⁴⁹ it was one of the underlying maxims of Luther "that human nature has been created for participation in the life of God and is destined to reach it to a degree of which we can form no conception save from the exemplary instance of Jesus Christ our Head."

If, therefore, I were asked to summarize briefly my own view of the person of Jesus, I should express it somewhat as follows: I believe that Jesus Christ was divine in a sense different in kind from that in which any other man can be spoken of as divine; that he was the Son of God in a unique sense and an incarnation of God in a sense different from that in which we can all be said to be incarnations of God. Some have asked the question, "If God fully dwelt in Jesus, was the universe running without God during Christ's earthly life, or did Christ control the planets from his cradle at Bethlehem?" Of course the answer is, "Neither." The latter suggestion is monstrous. The former is answered by saying that God added incarnation in Jesus to the sum of all his other works. I do not believe that the story of a virgin birth is relevant to what I have just written. In the case of many great men stories have afterward been circulated that their birth was mysterious. It may have been so in the case of Jesus. On the other hand, I could not myself rule out such a story as impossible. In my view the New Testament does not base anything significant upon it, and

⁴⁹ *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 239.

what Jesus is to me, he is, quite independently of the manner of his birth. I believe that because of his perfect reaction to God and against sin he gradually attained consciousness that he was in a unique sense, the Son of God, that his was a share in the Eternal Godhead though in a subordinate sense, and what I called achievement on page 22 might, looking at it from another angle, be truly called a gradually awakening consciousness of a condition always present. I believe that he reveals God perfectly, and so I believe that he must be what he reveals, for if he be less, the revelation is to that extent imperfect. I leave room for moral choice and striving and the possibility that by failure he might never have known his own nature and died merely a great Prophet. His perfect holiness was not automatic or inevitable. Not to allow this takes away his humanity in order to invest him with a certain view of Deity. But sinless, he realized an eternal possibility and is differentiated from all other men as definitely and essentially as the apelike man is differentiated from the manlike ape. The question whether it is the purpose of God that all men shall be like him I leave unanswered. I view with sympathy this speculation as a worthy climax to the human story on which the slow story of evolution is so significant a comment. But I feel that men cannot be as Christ unless God gives himself to them as he gave himself in taking our human nature—not necessarily our flesh—in Jesus Christ. Incarnation can never be understood only or mainly as man's achievement. It can only be a gift of God. I find no difficulty in worshipping Christ. To be honest, I find that usually my prayers are directed to God, but that in hours of great spiritual exaltation

I pray to Christ.⁵⁰ I do not identify Jesus with God the Father, for to do so would be to make nonsense of Jesus' prayers to God. I note the subordination of the Son to the Father. But for me Christ has all the values of God. He is the Perfect Revelation of God revealing as much of the mind and heart of God as human nature can reveal on the one hand or apprehend on the other.

Dr. Emil Brunner has an impressive analogy⁵¹ with which I should like to close this section. Speaking of prophets, religious leaders, geniuses, he says: "We see one huge marching army of men moving toward a far goal—salvation, God. This marching army has the form of a wedge—sharp-pointed in front, and widening out backward almost to infinity. In front we see the leaders and heroes, the pioneers, the men of genius, the saints, the sages. They are far ahead of the others, like a vanguard, and yet they are all connected; they form one army, one humanity, seeking the salvation which they all need. Among them, perhaps among those ahead, there are some whom they call prophets. These have no pre-eminent position, but with their finger they point to a spot above them all: Look there, listen there; there is the salvation you need! Not that they are that spot; what distinguishes the prophets from so many leaders is just this self-effacement. They know that it is no use to march in front, because the

Note
⁵⁰ Compare Archbishop Temple: "If the man of science would learn what it is that makes believers so sure of what they hold, he must study with an open heart the Jesus of the gospel; if the believer seeks to keep his faith steady in the presence of so many and sometimes so violent storms of disputation, he will read of, ponder on, and pray to, the Lord Jesus Christ." Quoted in *Christus Veritas*, p. 105. The Macmillan Company.

⁵¹ Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World*. Student Christian Movement Press, pp. 46-48.

spot to which they point is not on the same plane as the human route of march. They know and say: 'You cannot reach it by marching; you cannot come to salvation, but salvation comes to you.' And yet, although they see it coming, they cannot say, 'Here it is!'

"And now this approaching point of light, to which they direct attention, touches the earth and comes to meet the marching army, and behold! it is a Man. Not a man out of the army seeking salvation; but One who comes alone to meet the marching army, to give what they seek. And now some recognize him: it is he who is what the prophets had said, he whom, perhaps imperfectly and indistinctly, they saw coming. He is the Saviour! This picture may help us to understand what Christianity means by saying, 'Jesus the Christ, the Word that has become flesh.' They mean the One who is not in the movement of seeking for God, but who makes the opposite movement of bringing God to men; the One in whom God gives that Word, that salvation which no man, no sage, no genius can give. All historical human life—the movements of that army—has its heights and its depths, its advances and its retreats. But all these are moments or elements of that one movement and of that one direction—Godward."

Yet when we have said all, and tried to include in a survey of the person of Christ those great elements on which the New Testament lays stress, we know we have only made a blundering guess. "The Galilæan is too great for our little hearts." He is also too great for our little minds and pens.

What is written above is merely a point of view of one preacher whose greatest joy and privilege it is to

Note
try to preach the Good News that he brought and the Good News he is. But even a personal point of view must not be set down without the recognition that an honest attempt to understand him, cramps and limits him. We release him, perhaps from the restrictions of the thinking of our great-grandfathers, only to bind him in fetters of our own. The old thought-forms chafe us, and, we think, do not serve to explain him. But our grandchildren will say the same of ours. The new discoveries that will teem into their view will all be pressed into his service. Each generation will accept the task of making the mystery of his person acceptable to itself. Each generation will emphasize those things in his person which are readily interpreted by its own thought-forms and delight to flash the light from the latest "science" upon his person, realizing, as little as we do, that only a few aspects are thus lit up, sublimely unconscious that qualities in him which did not fit into those thought-forms were conveniently left out.

In my own lifetime Christ has been depicted as a God in disguise going through a set program ordained for him from the foundation of the world; a Person full of supernatural powers, very remote from men, who finally, throwing off the disguise, migrated to a distant heaven, and resumed his divine attributes.⁵² He has more recently been depicted as the very human

⁵² Many, taking this view, have argued: "Jesus did not really suffer much. He became poor for a time but only as a wealthy man for a day lives in a hovel to see what it is like and then returns to his wealthy life." But this is to misunderstand the incarnation. Christ identified himself with humanity. During his lifetime this identity was revealed in a human life, but it was a revelation of an eternal identification, a revelation, and a translation into terms of time and space of God's eternal identification with the sufferings of men. See my *Transforming Friendship*, p. 153.

Jesus, not very different from ourselves, and certainly only in degree. For years I was captivated by the pictures of such a Jesus as we are given, say, in *The Jesus of History*.⁵³ But without noticing it I gained a clearer and valuable picture of Christ the Example but lost something of the sense of Christ as Saviour. No! There is far, far more! Every book I read about him helps me but none satisfies me. None deals adequately with those awe-inspiring contrasts. The word "humanity" describes him, but the word "Deity" cannot be left out without doing injustice to the records. He is tender and compassionate; but he is violent and uncompromising. He could make a child feel at home on his knee; but he could make his powerful enemies quail before him. He said that by him men would be judged; but he was meek and lowly in heart. He said the most awful things about sin that have ever been spoken; but he said the kindest things to sinners that human ears have ever heard. He asks from me my all, yet he gives himself to me utterly. He is the most knowable man who ever lived, yet no one has ever explained him. He asserts his authority at every turn, yet he withdraws from the applauding crowds. His joyous comradeship raises scandal, yet they call him the Man of Sorrows. He raises from the dead, yet he deliberately chooses death. He has power such as none has ever had before or since, yet he ever knocks and waits and listens before he passes the low lintel of the human life awaiting the true love of the heart, the full allegiance of the will and concerned that no violence to our mental processes is ever demanded from us. He died two thousand years ago, yet to thousands he

⁵³ A most able and appealing book by Dr. T. R. Glover.

is a greater reality than their dearest friend, without whom joy would pass away from life and leave it cold and bleak and dead.

So we must leave the matter ; leave it with our whole being on its knees, hushed and awed and bowed in adoration.

“Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ ! Thou art the
Everlasting Son of the Father.”

II

BOYHOOD

A Boy was born at Bethlehem
That knew the haunts of Galilee.
He wandered on Mount Lebanon,
And learned to love each forest tree.

But I was born at Marlborough,
And love the homely faces there;
And for all other men besides
'Tis little love I have to spare.

I should not mind to die for them,
My own dear downs, my comrades true,
But that great Heart at Bethlehem,
He died for men he never knew.

And yet, I think, at Golgotha,
As Jesus' eyes were closed in death,
They saw with love most passionate
The village street at Nazareth.

—*Sir Edward Hilton Young.*

(By permission of Messrs. Sidgwick & Jackson.)

A KNIGHT'S PRAYER

My Lord, I am ready on the threshold of this new day to go forth armed with thy power, seeking adventure on the high road, to right wrong, to overcome evil, to suffer wounds and endure pain if need be, but in all things to serve thee bravely, faithfully, joyfully, that at the end of the day's labor, kneeling for thy blessing, thou mayest find no blot upon my shield. Amen.

—*Copied from the Children's Corner in Chester Cathedral.*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Luke 2. 41-52.

CHAPTER II

BOYHOOD

ONE of the most encouraging signs of the reality of the religious quest in England to-day is the profound love, hunger, and reverence for Jesus to be found everywhere. Men and women who have no use for religion and who are definitely hostile to organized religion, church members, and particularly parsons; who are confused by ritual and bewildered by theology, are attracted to Jesus. During the last ten years the pendulum has swung away from theological discussion about Jesus and speculation about his divinity, to the gazing upon a human life, and it may be said with truth that this generation knows the human Jesus better than any other generation since the first. Almost all men and women are ready to begin with the human approach to Jesus. This itself is very significant, for, as Mr. John Middleton Murry has said,¹ "It is absurd to suppose that Jesus was in any sense an ordinary man, since if he had been, criticism would not now, nineteen hundred years afterward, be striving to prove that he was."

There are many ways of making Jesus real, by which I mean real, here and now. Thousands feel that that glorious Spirit, who, in the flesh, walked through Galilee nineteen hundred years ago, is accessible to them to-day. Some make their contact through the eucharist and some in lonely or corporate prayer, some in fellow-

¹ *Life of Jesus*, p. 9 (Jonathan Cape).

ship and some in the services of the church, but, for myself, Jesus seems most knowable and most real when I make his earthly life real to myself; when, following Ruskin's advice, I endeavor "to be present, as if in the body, at each recorded event in the life of the Redeemer." I therefore want in the next fourteen chapters simply to look at his earthly life, to look, and look, and look, until he becomes real. It will not be my purpose to try to draw out all the moral lessons of the incidents of his life. If we look at him, he himself will do something in us, and that something will be the answer to all our prayers.

Let us begin by looking at the boyhood of Jesus. It is not difficult to imagine the workman's cottage in which he lived. Jesus had memories of a candle lighting all that were in the house, of a neighbor knocking at midnight who could be answered without getting out of bed; a poor house where the loss of six pence was a tragedy. Part of it, raised above the rest by only a foot or so, would be the part where Jesus and his mother and father ate and slept, the lower part would be where the animals gathered together for protection.² We can be quite sure that in the early days Jesus must have been dearly loved by both Joseph and Mary,³ though later, as I hope to show in a subsequent chapter, Mary probably strongly disapproved of what she may have called her Son's fad or craze to be a preacher.

The childhood of Jesus was probably a time of great

² In James Neil's *Everyday Life in the Holy Land* some splendid descriptions and pictures are given of the interior of the type of house in which Jesus lived. Published by The Church Mission to Jews.

³ One wonders whether the word "Talitha"—"Little lamb"—which he used at the raising of Jairus' daughter was a reminiscence of a pet name which his mother used of him.

happiness as he grew up wondering at the beauty of his Father's world, loving all and beloved by all, playing among the shavings, driving the beasts out to pasture as soon as he could walk, rejoicing in childhood's games and pranks, getting his feet wet, misplacing Joseph's tools, attending the village school, stammering out his first passages of Hebrew Scripture, a language he had to learn since his people spoke Aramaic, picking flowers in the woods, watching the glories of the sunset, startled at the ineffable mystery of the dawn—a human, happy, normal boy.

The miracle of Jesus' boyhood, however, is to be found in Joseph. Modern psychology has made a contribution of value in emphasizing the importance of the very early days of the child. It would underline the saying of Cardinal Manning that "if you have a child for the first seven years of his life, you can form his character." We know little enough of Joseph, but he has a monument which reaches unto heaven. It is the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer. Martin Luther, we are told, could never utter the first phrase of the Lord's Prayer without a shudder because of what his father was. Readers of Shelley's poem, "The Cenci," will remember that Beatrice felt the same, and Jesus would never have been able to teach that God is as a father unless Joseph had been a very wonderful man. We think of the story of the prodigal son and the rôle which the father takes. A laddie in a Sunday-school class who heard that story said, "My daddy isn't like that." We recall Jesus' words, "If ye then, being evil, . . . how much more shall your heavenly Father . . .," and we may fairly deduce that Jesus' memories of Joseph were among the great causative

factors in what he afterward became and the stories he afterward told. In the Old Testament God was said to be like a father, but in the New Testament God *is* a Father, and one reason why translators of the Bible have left the Aramaic word "*abba*" instead of being content to translate it may well be that Jesus had such a marvelous inflection in his voice when he used that word that it became untranslatable. The word "father" was not eloquent enough. They could not do other than retain the original word which he made so peculiarly his own.

Apocryphal writings contain stories about Jesus' boyhood suggesting that he could make clay sparrows and then endow them with life, and that when a school-mate pushed him roughly in a game, he turned him into stone. Though we long for more detail of the boyhood, we are glad that the Gospels writers content themselves with the restrained statement that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and found favor with God and man. We must take into our account the one story of his boyhood which Saint Luke has preserved for us, a story which does not occur in any of the other Gospels.⁴ We can imagine the excitement of the boy of twelve setting out for his first thrilling journey, as we should say to-day, an eighty-mile hike, to Jerusalem, a city more full of romance for a Jewish boy than London is for an English boy or New York or Washington for an American boy. Moreover, this Jewish boy was a religious genius, whatever else we we may like to say about him. We know how some boys interested in music would give anything to sit at the feet of Kreisler, or boys interested in engines

⁴ Luke 2. 41-50.

would love to be shown the workings of a great locomotive by anyone competent to do so. So this boy, endowed by God with religious genius from the beginning, is simply enthralled by the Temple and its services, and especially by the great doctors of the law who, at certain times of the day, were available to any who liked to ask them questions.

It may sound to us an evidence of slackness somewhere that there was a possibility of Jesus getting lost, but we may remember that Joseph would have tools to buy, Mary would have special shopping to do, and that it was usual for the men and women in such a caravan to travel in separate bands, the children accompanying either parents. Joseph would, therefore, imagine he was with Mary, and Mary would think that he was with Joseph. At the end of the first day's march they would join each other and miss him, and then we know with what troubled minds they hastened back to look for him. Some unknown woman with a mother's heart, however, had given him food and shelter, tucked him up, perhaps with her own laddie, and looked after him. On the third day after their setting out they found him seated among other disciples at the feet of the rabbis, listening, and asking them such interested questions that they were amazed at his understanding and his answers. There is no hint in the original narrative that we are meant to suppose that Jesus had any conscious superhuman knowledge. One ancient writer describes the boy Jesus as "expounding hard questions of theology, astronomy, and physics," and another says, "He was questioning the teachers that he might instruct them." All this, of course, has been read into the narrative by those who have a false idea of divin-

ity, namely, the idea of divinity which equates it with magic. Nothing more is intended but that just as our boy might be watching engines, forgetting time and space and our convenience, so the Temple and the rabbis captured the imagination of Jesus, who, one may suppose, was frequently in other places than where his parents expected to find him. Mary chides him: "Why did you do this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you in great distress." The child's answer is sublime in its simplicity. We can imagine his arms flung round his mother's neck: "Oh, mummy, didn't you guess where I should be? I must be in the things of my Father"—for already that was the relationship in which he thought of God. His "Wist ye not" is equivalent to a modern child's "You do understand, don't you, mummy?" But I am afraid they did not understand. Indeed, Saint Luke says so. "They understood not the saying which he spake unto them."

We can only imagine the boy in this village of Nazareth, nestling among the hills, a village not far from the main thoroughfares on which Jesus would see the tramp of Roman soldiers, thieves being taken to crucifixion, and the traffic of commerce passing along the roads. It is in a beautiful spot. How often may Jesus have flung himself down among the wild flowers and thought the long, long thoughts of youth!—dreamed, as every boy dreams, of what he would like to do and be. What a Lover of nature he was!—so different from most Jews. Saint Paul apparently had no love of nature's birds and beasts. It was incredible to him that God could love a cow.⁵ But to Jesus all birds and beasts were his little brothers in God's beautiful world,

⁵ 1 Corinthians 9. 9.

and as he lay among the grasses on the hillsides looking into the tiny faces of the wild flowers he saw the face of his Father.

So we may imagine him learning, first at home where every Jewish child's education began, from a copy of the Scriptures which Joseph may have acquired, then at seven years of age going to the elementary school attached to the synagogue. Think of him too as running errands for his mother, playing with tools and bits of wood in his father's shop, helping with the other little children which began to come along, playing in the village street at weddings and funerals,⁶ watching the yeast make the dough rise, watching his mother sewing patches in the worn clothes, watching the shepherds on the hills out after their sheep, the sower sowing his seed, the pouring of wine into bottles, the lamps replenished and cleaned, the grinding of corn in a mill, the baking of bread in an oven, and all the thousand things from which afterward he made parables which ever since have thrilled the imagination of the world.

Dr. T. R. Glover has made a very beautiful suggestion.⁷ He says, "Is it fanciful to suggest that what the churches have always been saying about coming to Jesus began to be said in a natural and spontaneous way in that shop?" We know that Jesus had at least four brothers and two sisters. These little brothers and sisters would not always agree, tempers would sometimes become hot, Mary at times must have become impatient, especially after Joseph died, when Jesus

⁶ Dr. Paterson Smyth says that "'we piped unto you,' etc., is the chorus of a child's play-verse like our 'London Bridge is falling down.'"


⁷ In *The Jesus of History*, p. 29.

would be perhaps thirteen. We may be allowed to imagine that the big Brother came sometimes and took those little children off to his workshop, set one to brush up shavings, another to pick up nails, made them some jolly little cart in which they could play, or took them off to the hills and told them stories. Certainly, all the skill of Jesus to tell stories did not suddenly come at thirty years of age. All his understanding of life, all his tenderness to little children, did not come suddenly in a flash.

We are not to imagine a boyhood lived free from all care and worry in a house where money can make the wheels move round smoothly and quickly. Those of us who have seen an Eastern small house feel quite a shock to think of the boyhood of Jesus—remembering all that psychology says about the importance of early environment—living in what might fairly be called a dark, evil-smelling hole. Think of one room in a hot climate with a father and a mother and at least seven children, and probably a cow and an ass. Think of the lack of sanitation and all our modern aids to comfort. Yet out of that dark pool there springs the most lovely lotus of character the world has ever known.

I am not too concerned with pointing the moral. It is enough just to look at any section of his life. But when I think of the things we want for our children, the advantages we want to give them, the good start we covet for them, the environment, education, and conditions, and then turn back to the boyhood of Jesus, whose greatest advantage was a devout father and mother, I begin to wonder whether we are putting the emphasis in the right place and paying enough attention to prayer, patience, and example; for though

it is hard to think there will ever be another Jesus, it is almost frightening to think that our wrong attitude may deny the purposes of God in our own children. So many men and women to-day are adrift from religion because of the tyranny of home which forced them to go to church or attend family prayers. So many to-day point to the churchgoer as being no better than the so-called outsider. So many—in more dangerous condition still—are familiar with expressions which describe great spiritual experiences, have been familiar with them from childhood; but of those spiritual experiences so described they have no first-hand knowledge of their own which in hours of temptation, stress and calamity, like an anchor grounded securely on the rock, would hold the bark steady through all the storms that sweep the seas of life. Must we not therefore set aside all coercion in religion and, not following their souls too forcibly, except with our prayers, be what we want our children to become? “If I am thy child, O God,” said Saint Augustine, “it is because thou didst give me such a mother.” Carlyle said the strongest spiritual influence of his youth was his mother’s praying. He wrote, “The highest whom I knew on earth, I saw bowed down to a higher in heaven. Such things, especially in infancy, reach inward to the very core of your being.” Doctor Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, used to crouch outside his father’s bedroom door to hear him pray. He wrote: “If everything else in religion were by some accident blotted out, my soul would go back to those days of reality. For sixty years my father kept up the practice of family prayer. None of us can remember that any day passed without it. No hurry for



business or market, no arrival of friends or guests, no trouble or sorrow, no joy or excitement ever prevented us from kneeling round the family altar while our high priest offered himself and his children to God." Paton's father was a farm laborer. His boy was a missionary. Joseph was a carpenter. His boy was—Jesus. We fathers and mothers are very busy these days. But the hopes of the world are intrusted to us. Our children probably get from us two of the most important things a man has: his sense of values and his idea of God. If we tread down in indifference, carelessness, or sloth the flowers of our children's religious life, let us at least tread gently. We are treading on the dream of God.

III

BUSINESS

I don't know right where as His shed must ha' stood—
But often, as I've been a-planing my wood,
I've took off my hat, just with thinking of He
At the same work as me.

He warn't that set up that He couldn't stoop down
And work in the country for folks in the town;
And I'll warrant He felt a bit pride, like I've done,
At a good job begun. . . .

So I comes right away by mysen, with the Book,
And I turns the old pages and has a good look
For the text as I've found, as tells me as He
Were the same trade as me.

—*Catherine C. Liddell.*

(By permission of Mrs. G. F. Watts.)

Very dear the Cross of Shame
Where he took the sinners' blame,
And the tomb wherein he lay
Until the third day came.
But he walked the self-same road,
And he bore the self-same load,
When the Carpenter, of Nazareth,
Made common things for God.

—*Walter C. Smith.*

PRAYER

God of our life, there are days when the burdens we carry chafe our shoulders and weigh us down; when the road seems dreary and endless, the skies gray and threatening; when our lives have no music in them, and our hearts are lonely, and our souls have lost their courage. Flood the path with light, we beseech thee; turn our eyes to where the skies are full of promise; tune our hearts to brave music; give us the sense of comradeship with heroes and saints of every age; and so quicken our spirits that we may be able to encourage the souls of all who journey with us on the road of life, to thy honor and glory. Amen.

—From *Acts of Devotion*.

(By permission of Society for Promotion Christian Knowledge Press.)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 11. 28-30; Mark 3. 20-35; Mark 6. 3-6.

CHAPTER III

BUSINESS

IN this chapter we are to look at Jesus in the carpenter's shop. We are to try to imagine him doing what so many of us have to do—earning his living by exhausting labor and carrying with him that burden which lines the face and weighs upon the heart, the burden of responsibility, for the welfare of other people. We are to think of Jesus now in his later teens and early twenties, a fatherless young Man on whose shoulders rests the responsibility for his widowed mother, four brothers, and at least two sisters. In the last chapter we saw him in the Temple reveling in the things of his Father. No doubt it was his wish to go at once to college and begin to train as a rabbi. This dear ambition has to be given up, for the time being, in order that he may put bread into the mouths of those seven people who depended on him.

It is not very easy to describe the carpenter's shop. We are not sure whether it was near his own home or down in the Bazaar. Quite probably a large part of the work was done in the open air, where carpenters still do much of their work in the East; and it is pleasing to think that, after all, carpentry does not alter much the world over. The tools he would use are familiar to us all. One of the main differences would be the way they had in the East of using their feet. Jesus must often have watched Joseph squatting on the ground, holding wood between his feet while he worked at it,

and Jesus would learn to do that also. He would have small jobs to do. He would repair and make tables, wooden chests, shelves, and so on. But more responsible tasks would also come to him. He would have to fit door frames and doors into the houses of Nazareth. He may have taken some part in the rebuilding of Sepphoris which was burned down by the Roman general, Varus, when Jesus was a boy. For the young carpenters of Sepphoris were probably killed in the fighting, or crucified, or sent as slaves across the sea. No doubt also Jesus would teach his brothers his own craft, and teach them with an added enthusiasm that they should learn, since the earlier they learned to carry on the business, the sooner he could go on to his world task.

It is hard for us to understand what was demanded of Jesus. In his breast a fire was burning that glowed hotter and brighter as each day passed. From the depths of the unconscious where the secret lay buried there rose into consciousness half-understood intimations of the mystery of his being, who he was, and for what purpose he had come into the world. He began to realize God's great purpose in his life, to see more and more clearly a vision which no one else has ever seen, to feel that he was in a relationship with God which was unique, and yet, day after day, day after day, for at least eighteen years, he had to plane wood, melt glue, hammer in nails. One wonders how he did it, and I suppose the only solution of that problem is that he lived so near to God that he knew, without doubt, what God's will for him was each day. And he lived a day at a time. We must speak carefully here. A lot of talk about the will of God is so confusing.

We are not rashly to deduce that it was the perfect will of God that Joseph should die, and that Jesus should be tied to the carpenter's shop for so long. I find it helpful to separate in my mind what I should call the ultimate and the interim will of God; the ideal will of God and the will of God under certain circumstances, and *under the circumstances* it was the will of God that Jesus should patiently stick to the carpenter's shop until those circumstances changed and allowed him an honorable freedom. In the same way, as we look from his life to ours, it is not the purpose or intention of God that hundreds of our fellows should be doing the things they have to do every day, or living the life they have to live, but under the circumstances—circumstances often thrust upon them by human conditions that have little of the divine in them—it is the will of God that they should face those conditions nobly, and quietly and patiently, until honorable freedom comes, or, in some other way, the circumstances are changed. Faithful in little things, they will be given wider opportunity in the "greater things." What is more, the early experiences will be a training for the later ones. Those who resent the present handicap and allow themselves to daydream too much of wider chances, forget that the deeds of the limited to-day are the only stones that we have with which to build the castle of to-morrow's desire.

Let us look at Jesus and ask how he reacted to these cramped circumstances. We do not find him saying, "I am worth much more scope than this narrow life allows." He who afterward called men to leave father and mother and brothers for his sake did not leave his own, and we see here another illustration that the words

of the Gospels are not hard-and-fast rules which all must follow. The spirit of the gospel teaching is that if we live near enough to God, he will tell us clearly what to do. What Jesus seems to have done was to have taken each day as it came and to have made a perfect offering of it to God, thus turning each day into gold. We cannot suppose that Jesus was wasting his time. He listened to the talk of customers. Here is a man who came to ask for an estimate for the building of a new barn and who boasted loudly of his riches, yet only a few days afterward his son came to ask the carpenter to make a coffin in which to carry his father to his grave.¹ Here is a foolish farmer who bought a plow from Jesus and then, turning round to speak to a friend, drives it into a boulder and splinters it. He comes back complaining that it could not have been well made. Again and again, as one reads the words of Jesus, the impression is strong that they are full of reminiscences.²

Whence came that amazing power to take the ordinary homely things of life and from them make those parables which the world will always treasure. The leaven, the patch on a garment, the wine in the bottles, the lamp on the lampstand, the sweeping of a house, the farmer sowing his corn, the shepherd seeking his sheep, the father with his boys, all are pressed into his service. Those watchful eyes were taking things in. That wonderful mind was turning them over. That penetrating insight was looking into the meanings of things. Probably many of the parables took their first shape in those early days.

¹ I have borrowed this fancy from Mr. Basil Mathews.

² Compare Luke 12. 13ff.; Luke 9. 62.

Mary is tired and bothered. The children are getting on her nerves. Comes the big Brother giving up so readily the leisure that was so scanty and so badly needed for reading the brave books of old which now we call the Old Testament. He takes the youngsters all off to the hillside. They lie down among the wild pansies. The youngest snuggles under the crook of his arm. Another, a grass stem between his teeth, squats on his haunches and cannot take his eyes off his Brother's face. What stories! All ill-temper is banished under this fairy spell. Is Jesus wasting his time?

“What was he doing all that time
From boyhood then to early prime,
Was he then idle, or the less,
About his Father's business?”

The answer must be “No.” Whether it was God's ideal intention or not, it was God's interim will and Jesus' attitude toward life and his love for God were such that he *made* all things work together for good.

It is permissible to make up another picture. Imagine Jesus rising early to get his day's work done in order that the following evening he may go up into the hills round Nazareth to dream his dreams and see his visions, learn his Father's purposes, look into his Father's face. At five o'clock, just as he is about to shut the shop, a man pulls up his oxen at the door, unfastens the heavy yoke from their shoulders, hails the young Carpenter and demands that it should be planed smooth at once. Jesus cannot refuse the work. He may have been the only carpenter in the village, but it is not good business, any way, to refuse work when there are eight mouths to fill every day. One can

imagine Jesus, his fingers caressing the ears or noses of the oxen, helping to lift the heavy yoke from the galled neck. He takes the yoke into the shop, planes it smooth, takes special care that it fits the aching shoulders, and is so polite, so courteous, so thorough, that the brusque customer never dreams for a moment that he has spoiled the carpenter's day. It is all part of the discipline of his spirit. Years afterward he gazes lovingly into the tired faces of men and women whose spirits have been chafed raw by the circumstances of life, and with infinite tenderness in his voice he says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy, not galling and chafing, and my burden is light." He said it in the midst of his ministry, but he learned it in the carpenter's shop.

Then there must have come that great moment when James, the next brother to Jesus, became old enough and skilled enough to take over the business. Probably Mary was antagonistic to Jesus' leaving home. Mothers are often hostile to their sons—or, for that matter, daughters—leaving home. And when the Son is doing well in the village, earning the approval of all, bringing enough money to make life comfortable, it is not easy for a mother, cheerfully to say "Good-by" to a son who throws up his work to become a traveling preacher.

There is evidence that it took Mary a long while to get over her resentment. Those who are misunderstood at home are well understood by Jesus. Mary's hostility may have accounted for Jesus beginning his

ministry at Capernaum.³ At any rate we can see it revealed poignantly in the scene related by Saint Mark,⁴ when Jesus without a protest from his relatives is called mad. Perhaps the words, "He is mad," were even from their lips. What pathos there is in the reply of Jesus when news is brought him that his mother and brothers are without, calling for him! With a rare gesture—the only time such a gesture is described in the New Testament—he stretches out his hand and asks, "Who is my mother and my brethren?" And he answers his own question with words that reveal how jarred and difficult his home life may have been. "Those who do the will of God," he says, "are my closest relations."

Here and there sentences stand out which support the same contention. It is impossible to eliminate the reminiscent note from some of his words. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, *and among his own kin, and in his own house.*"⁵

Jesus' brother James, though a righteous and good man, shared in the misunderstanding of the rest of the family. Doctor Robertson thinks that James's strong words about the tongue⁶ are the fruit of his remorse at having said so many things in criticism of his Brother. James's hostility may have been maintained even up to the cross, and Jesus' committal of his now

³ The suggestion has been made that a new business was opened in Capernaum, over the fortunes of which Jesus could cast an occasional eye, the Nazareth business being left for Jesus' sister and her husband after their wedding at Cana of Galilee. Compare *The Hidden Romance of the New Testament*, by J. A. Robertson, p. 234. James Clark & Co.

⁴ 3. 20 ff.

⁵ Mark 6. 4ff. John 7. 3.

⁶ James 3. 5ff.; 4. 11ff.; 5. 12ff. Robertson, *op cit.*, pp. 236-37.

reconciled mother to John is hardly likely save in the absence of James. After the cross, James too was reconciled. One wonders what tender incident lies behind that austere sentence in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, "Then he appeared to James."⁷ At the same time we must sympathize with James. How would we feel if our elder brother, just at the time when the business was beginning to prosper, deserted it and set up to be a preacher, and a preacher who was very unorthodox, and who began his ministry by attacking the whole bench of bishops?

Let us turn from his life to ours. There are many who feel: "Yes, that is all very well, but the moment of release did come for Jesus. It has never come for me. I would like to have realized my personality, I would like my dreams to have come true; but now the evening is coming on, my powers are impaired. Even if the chance came, I could not take it. There is little comfort in your message for me." It is a fair question. Let me try to answer it.

A moment's contemplation of the dull routine in which so many of our fellows are compelled to spend their time drives one to seek from God some message which can make every life full of meaning and significance.

One such message the trembling fingers of faith fix on easily. It is that expressed in Browning's line, "All service ranks the same with God." It is not the work, but the spirit in which we do it, which determines whether it is sacred or secular. It does not matter finally whether one lights a fire in a kitchen or in another's soul; whether one sells soap or sermons. Better be a

⁷ I Corinthians 15. 7.

good butcher than a bad bishop; it is better service to God. Any service to the community is service to God.

So the argument runs, and there is both truth and comfort in it. But it would be idle to pretend that it goes far enough. To people of splendid personality, whose lives seem thwarted and more than half of whose nature is unexpressed, the argument sounds hollow.

Here is a grocer who so wanted to be a minister, but the doctor tells him the state of his heart is such that he could never undergo the training. Here is a draper who wanted to be a mining engineer, but his father pushed him to his own business which he hates and in which he has all but failed. Here is a girl who would have made a willing and splendid missionary, but she has to stay and serve her father and mother. Here is another who would have given anything to have babies of her own, but her man was killed in the war; indeed, half her generation was wiped out in it, so she tries to smother her hunger and ease the ache of empty arms by minding other folks' bairns.

"Do your present work to the glory of God"—Is that all we can say? Is that the only message for the thwarted, disappointed life? I am certain it is not.

I believe that for every man and woman in the world there will come an hour of destiny, or, if you will, of self-fulfillment. There will be—unless we finally say "No" to God and lose all hope and faith—an opportunity to fulfill that purpose for which God brought us into the world.

Many of our fellows live lives crippled by hunger, poverty, and disease. Hundreds are physically disabled. Thousands never have any real chance to be all that it is in them to be. One thinks of unemployed

fathers, mothers who toil and wash and mend, men and women who suffer for the best years of their lives, through some deprivation of health, opportunity, or money. Tens of thousands of lives are throttled down to a tenth of their possible speed and efficiency through having to get their bread and butter in ways from which they cannot now escape, or through splendid loyalties to lowly but honor-bound, self-imposed tasks. Countless others set out every morning, slave at uncongenial tasks in mill, office, factory, and mine, only to come home tired in mind and body with some of the finest possibilities of their personality unexpressed.

Yet must it not be true—not too good to be true, but so good that it must be true—that all there is of possibility in every personality will one day be used?

To realize this our vision must extend beyond the gates of death. We cannot too often tell ourselves that this life, however glorious and important, is less than a single inch compared with those infinite distances about which the new Physics speaks, in relation to those further opportunities in which all that is good in personality can be used.

The broken pillar in the cemetery is a false image. Are we to suppose that the destiny of a magnificent thing like the human spirit is settled at death? Are we to believe that ultimately the purposes of an Omnipotent and Infinite Being are defeated by a germ, by falling coal, by a drunken taxi driver, or a surgeon's mistake?

I believe most assuredly that either on this side of death or the other there will come to every human spirit an hour when God calls up all the resources of the personality, assets which he has been guarding

jealously all the years; when everything suffered, everything borne, everything overcome, every talent, every bit of character, everything we now dream we might become, will be used, mobilized, and dedicated to some high purpose, a purpose which is the only reason why we ever emerged from that infinite source of personality from which, by the method of human birth, we were drawn as water from a well. The poets, who stand to us, I think, much as Isaiah and Jeremiah stood to the Jews, are sure of this gospel. So Tennyson holds

“That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That no one life shall be destroyed;
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.”

The doctrine is an even greater favorite with Browning. One is tempted to quote too much, but turn in some spare hour to “Rabbi Ben Ezra” and to “Abt Vogler” and read the brave words of one who believes that

“There shall never be one lost good!”

“All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist.”

“And what is our failure here but a triumph’s evidence
For the fullness of the days?”

“All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God.”

“There is a tide in the affairs of men,” says one, greater even than Browning, “which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” Will any son of man have no chance of catching that tide?

"Ere suns and moons could wax or wane,
Ere stars were thundergirt, or piled
The heavens, God thought on me, his child;
Ordained a life for me.
The Love of God for me began
Long before I became a man;
Before my lips could speak his Name,
Before from out the dark I came!
Within his mansions I was known
Before he made a cross his throne,
When not a seer with him had talked!
When with him not a saint had walked!
Where melt in clouds man's hidden ways,
Deep in the dim eternal days,
His eyes, across time's troubled sea,
Went peering forth in search of me."

So says Edward Shillito. "In his love he chose us as his own in Christ before the creation of the world." So says Saint Paul, writing to the Ephesians. Is all this rubbish or is it true? If it be true, it is very hard to believe that what was so carefully and lovingly planned can be so easily lost and that the worth of the human personality can be lightly thrown away.

The thought that God will use all that is of value in personality will seem unscientific to some. They will speak of the prodigal hand of nature which wastes so much and seems "so wasteful of the single life." They will babble of cod's eggs and dandelion seeds wasted by the million.

But in this matter we are dealing not with nature but with human nature. Jesus told us that always, if we are in doubt about the ways of God to men, we should go to the family and imagine the ways of a good father with his children. Has any one heard a father, much less a mother, say: "Well, we won't bother about

all the children; Tom is an invalid, let him die. Ethel is stupid, she shall be passed over"? The contrary is the rule. If there is disability, let everything be done to overcome it. "If ye then, . . . how much more shall your heavenly Father." That is the word of a higher authority in this sphere than that of science. Faith in God involves faith in the meaning of life; in the meaning of *every life*.

Think, for a moment of a brilliant surgeon, the skillful hands, the keen brain, the efficient personality mobilized and dedicated to a glorious task! Even a surgeon must die. And there will, we hope, be no operations in heaven. Then is that magnificent personality thrown away on the scrap heap? It cannot be. I cannot guess how those powers can be utilized, but faith in God means that they will be transmuted and used. And if true of the surgeon, true also of faithful workers in humbler spheres; true of my grocer who would be a minister, true of the girl who so wanted babies of her own, true in the case not only of those who achieve but those who have it in them to achieve. And what if what we call achievement were itself a training for something God plans to make of us? Plato believed that every beautiful thing had its spiritual counterpart in the eternal world. Why should this not be true of beautiful service for which service on this side is preparing us?

God's hour will come to you. You must not lose faith. The whole scheme of things is a vast jig-saw puzzle but somewhere in it you, with all your angles and edges, exactly fit. And the picture will not be complete without you. Your hour may come quite soon, sending you out in some splendid enterprise

for God and your fellows. But be ready and faithful in that which is least. "Whatever God hath ordained," said Mohammed, "can only be attained by striving." Your hour may need long preparation, even until the other side of death. The long story of man's evolution may be an eloquent comment on the time it may take him to bring us to our hour. But no athlete trains for this race without, one day, a chance to run. He made every life for some worthy and mighty purpose. On his side there will not be failure. You will get your chance. You will see the meaning of life. You will understand that many things that happen which, though not ideally intentioned by God, can yet be made to fall into place and contribute to your training for that glorious hour.

Sooner or later he will say to you, "Now, I want everything you can be." It may be that, in this world or another, Christ himself, that great Believer in the worth of human nature and the values of the human soul, will come and put his hand on your shoulder and on the shoulders of the humblest and least suspecting, and call you and them to the tasks ordained for all from the foundation of the world.

I will apply his own words in a different sense from that of their setting: "Watch therefore: . . . for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh."

IV

BAPTISM

How didst thou start, thou holy Baptist, bid
 To pour repentance on the Sinless Brow!
Then all thy meekness, from thy hearers hid
 Beneath the ascetic's port and preacher's fire,
 Flowed forth, and with a pang thou didst desire
 He might be chief, not thou.

And so on us, at whiles, it falls to claim
 Powers that we fear, or dare some forward part;
Nor must we shrink as cravens from the blame
 Of pride, in common eyes, or purpose deep;
But with pure thoughts look up to God, and keep
 Our secret in our heart.

—*John Henry Newman.*

PRAYER

O God our Father, let the hush of thy presence fall upon us now. Thou art always near us, but we are often so dull to sense thy nearness. Quietly as the evening falls, silently as stars steal into the sky, tenderly as a mother hushes her child, lead us into a deeper fellowship with thyself who art the true home of our spirits. May our minds recover their poise. May our love become more passionately sincere. May our wills become strong to endure. And may this threefold strengthening be to us the sign of thy presence, that thy glorious life has touched our own. Make this service one of those high places of the spirit, where ordinary men and women like ourselves may hear the voice of God, and look upon his face, and grant that this hour may be so radiant with thy glory that all other hours, because of this one, may shine with new beauty, new purpose, and new meaning. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 3. 13-17; or Mark 1. 9-11; or Luke 3. 21-23.

CHAPTER IV

BAPTISM

IN the last chapter we saw Jesus arrive at that great dramatic moment when, at last, after nearly twenty years, he could leave the business in the hands of James and his other brothers and be free to begin the great work.

How shall he begin?

To understand the situation we must look for a moment at another fascinating picture—the picture of John the Baptist. Tormented, goaded by the state of the land under the heel of Rome, John is yet in the true line of the prophets of the Old Testament. He does not raise a rebellion—he calls men to repentance. He was genius enough to see that any call to his fellows to arm was not only at variance with the will of Jehovah but was, in any case, hopeless. The strength of the Jews was never military but religious genius. Thus, by way of a great revival, John thought, the rule of God could be established and the people delivered. As a patriot he would desire their deliverance from Rome—perhaps this was in his mind—but a far greater passion within him was that his people should be delivered from the staleness and hypocrisy and meaningless ritual and convention of the times. Those times must have been very oppressing to the Jews. The taxes which had to be paid to Rome to support a heathen emperor would often amount to

a third of a man's whole income. On top of that taxes had to be paid to the Temple. Annas, and Caiaphas his son-in-law, grew rich at the expense of the people, and the most appalling extravagance was practiced, twenty thousand priests ministering in the Temple alone. The rule of Rome was one of oppression, but the rule of the priests was no less so, with the demands for scrupulous adherence to meaningless rules. The rule of the Sabbath, for instance, to name only one, that not only must a man do no work in our sense, but must not wear false teeth, for that was carrying a burden, but not scrape a chair along the ground, for that was plowing. A woman must not use a mirror on Sunday lest, espying a gray hair, she should pluck it out, and that was reaping. These trivial instances show what a tyranny of ridiculous custom the practice of religion had become. Against all this John's fiery soul was in passionate revolt, and after preparing himself, he lifted up his voice against it. The result was electric. It reminded the people of stories of Amos with his cry for justice, of Jeremiah with his biting sarcasm for those who oppressed the people, of Isaiah with his clarion call of challenge and hope.

Crowds came from everywhere to the banks of the Jordan to listen to this fearless and eloquent preacher. And there was no pandering to the scribes and Pharisees. As John was preaching one day a group of picnickers near by built a fire to cook their meal, and the bush above it, dry in the heat, caught fire. Instantly, scorpions, lizards, and a brood of vipers rushed from underneath the bush to escape the flames. John's pointing finger to a group of Pharisees standing near,

"You brood of vipers,¹ who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth the fruits of repentance and do not say, 'We have Abraham to our father': for out of these stones God can raise up children unto Abraham."

Among the crowds there must have been, again and again, One standing whom John never noticed. He listened to the fiery eloquence of his cousin and watched John examine those who professed repentance, one by one, and then, if satisfied with their sincerity, immerse them in the waters of Jordan as a symbol of their spiritual cleansing. One day, when the baptisms were over and John stood alone, Jesus walked into the water. One can imagine the drama of the scene. John, of course, knew Jesus. The two young men must often have talked together, and among the Jews a man outstandingly religious would be known throughout the countryside. John knew Jesus beforehand to be a man of unblemished character, and he also felt what we should feel, what we do feel when we go into the presence of a person of great spiritual power. He felt awed and hushed and moved to the depth of his being. "You come to me for baptism?" he said. "I need to be baptized by you." But Jesus brothered his mind, put him at his ease, by his words, "Suffer it to be so now."

Some writers have felt that his baptism was a confession of sin on the part of Jesus. John Middleton

¹ Not, in this context, a term of abuse. "John's hearers were men who knew that the stubble was set on fire each year before the plowing; most of them had seen it done and watched the snakes that lurked in the undergrowth writhing away before the flames. They heard no unkind emphasis in the epithet, 'Viper' but the blazing stubble flaming after the creeping things was a vivid picture of the wrath to come."—Shafto, *Stories of the Kingdom*, p. 10. Student Christian Movement Press.

Murry, who has written a valuable, if provocative, life of Jesus, says: "Whatever this man was, he was the incarnation of honesty. He would have sought no baptism for the remission of sins had he not been conscious of sin. He came out also to see and to hear a prophet; he would have seen him and heard him, but he would not have sought his baptism for no cause, and become one with the outward ritualists whom he so passionately condemned. In his later words we hear beyond all doubt the voice of one who had known sin, and the consciousness of sin, and the joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth."²

I myself hold to the sinlessness of Jesus, as far as we can perceive what sin is. If Jesus had been conscious of sin, I think he would have said so. His attitude would have been that of the poet.

"So let me draw you to the great Forgiveness,
Not as one above who stoops to save you,
Not as one who stands aside with counsel,
Nay! as he who says, 'I too was poisoned
With the flowers that sting, but now, arisen,
I am struggling up the path beside you;
Rise and let us face these heights together.'"

The facts, as we have tried to show, are that this was never Jesus' attitude. Whether Jesus was on so much higher a level of spiritual life, involving so much deeper an insight into the nature of sin, so that what appears white to me might be gray to him, and whether Jesus may have been conscious that through his adolescence there had been things which were sins from his point of view, it is impossible for us to say. The speculation to me seems unwarranted. But I cannot

² *Life of Jesus*, p. 31.

feel that Jesus' baptism was a cleansing from sin, but a great act of dedication.

What really happened? All the evangelists say practically the same thing. Jesus went up from the water "and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

I think these must have been the words which Jesus himself used later to describe what happened, for I believe what happened, happened to Jesus alone. I do not think there was anything to be seen except the expression of radiance and peace on the face of Jesus. Nor do I think that any outer voice was heard. Indeed, there would be something ludicrous in a dove suddenly perching upon him. *He* saw the heavens open, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him, and a voice out of heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son." We know, of course, the familiar way in the East of describing an event—in terms of imagery which are never meant to be taken literally. In this case it is hard to think that words could be found to describe the experience better. Matthew says, "The heavens were opened into him," for the word "unto" should be translated "into." We ourselves have the line in a familiar hymn. "Heaven comes down our souls to greet." What could better describe that sense of tremendous serenity and well-being and peace, which the psychologist calls "euphoria," than to say that God's Spirit fell upon him as gently and peacefully as the settling of a dove? And what could better describe his sense that all the dreams of his youth and man-

hood were confirmed, that in a special sense, he was God's Son, fulfilling God's purposes? What could better describe that transcendent sense of his complete unity with God, his certainty that God *had* called him to this tremendous work and would honor and stand by him, than to say that a voice from the unseen (the heavens) rang out in his own heart, "Thou art my beloved Son"? At that moment, tended by the long years of preparation, watered by tears, cultivated by repeated communion, strengthened and beautified by the sunshine of the love of God, the soul of Jesus burst into flower. For Jesus it was a rebirth, a sense of unutterable bliss, a sense of being filled with something or someone not himself, a sudden access of power, happiness, peace, and joy, the end of a search for, though not the end of his contact with and exploration of, reality; the confirmation that the God he had come to love and to separate from all the misrepresentations in the Old Testament, where there is not one God but many, was not a creature of his own imagination, but that he had found the living God and found him to be, in a unique sense, his Father. The experience of Jesus at his baptism has changed the whole world. At that moment Jesus arrived. He knew that his picture of God as a living Father was the truth. All the religious teachers of the day would be and were against him, but he *knew*. Something long in the depths of the unconscious and subconscious parts of his mind rushed up into full consciousness. While John was doing a very great and very valuable work, he belonged to the Old Covenant, talked about the old stern God, was in line with old prophets; but Jesus had, that moment, been born again into a new

world, and a new sense of values, and a new outlook on life, and the least soul in the New Kingdom would have something that John had not. As Jesus said—and no words so definitely mark off Christianity from all other religions—“Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; *notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*”

When we look from this great crisis in the life of Jesus to our own lives, do we not feel that we may have missed the way and disappointed God because instead of seeking his will for us with an utter surrender of ourselves, we have made our plans and said: “This is what I am going to be. I hope you will agree and fall in with it.” I do want to utter an appeal to youth especially to a complete dedication of career to God. Why decide that you will go into your father’s business because it is the easy thing to do? Why decide to take up teaching because it seems the least evil or objectionable of the courses you have open to you? Why not take time, even a year if need be, with all your windows open to Jerusalem, listening to what he may say to you? It is appalling to consider the little time spent in deciding on a career, considering that the result of the decision may determine the course of a life for half a century. Many people questing for God do themselves out of any great experience of God because they keep back their career for themselves. Doctor Temple, Archbishop of York, says, “To choose your career for selfish reasons is a worse sin than committing adultery, for it is the withdrawal of the greater part of your time and energy from the service of God.”³

³ *Christian Faith and Life*, p. 37. Student Christian Movement Press.

I do believe, with all my heart, that when we are prepared to surrender ourselves utterly, taking mere self out of life, then something happens. First, we know what God wants us to do, and, secondly, there comes to us that tremendous sense of well-being which only those know who feel that they are doing what God wants them to do and are fulfilling the purpose for which they were born. This is not a denial of ambition. Christianity never teaches that. To deny ambition is to put a premium on slackness, laziness, the unquickenened heart, and the sluggish brain. You cannot be your best self unless you are ambitious. May we not say in the best sense that Jesus was ambitious to reach Jerusalem and Paul ambitious to reach Rome? We must dedicate and sanctify ambition. We must take all that we are and can possibly be and offer it to God. "In His will is our peace," said Dante. And there is no peace worth the name outside God's will. If we wait, we shall know that will; if we ask for it, we shall have pluck to do that will. It may be that God does not want you to be a brilliant surgeon on a fashionable street, earning one hundred dollars for an operation, but a missionary in Central China doing the same operation for nothing. It may be that God wants you to be in the limelight, giving a lead to others and earning what is called fame. It may be that God wants you to tend some sick relative and to make the evening of one quiet life beautiful and serene. But I do believe that if you listen, you will hear. You will know what he wants you to do now, and in that doing you will find peace. If your life is truly and entirely surrendered, there will come that delicious sense of being where God wants you to

be and doing what God wants you to do, whether it be his interim or ultimate will, so that even to you the heavens will be opened into you. The peace of a dove will brood over you, and in some quiet moment of the soul you will hear a voice saying very clearly even to you, "My son, my beloved."

V

TEMPTATION

And I would sing the song of all creation,
A brave sky and a glad wind, blowing by,
A clear trail and an hour for meditation,
A long day and the joy to make it fly;
A hard task and the muscle to achieve it,
A fierce noon and a well-contented gloam,
A good strife and no great regret to leave it,
A still night and the far red lights of home.

—*H. H. Bashford.*

He said not,
"Thou shall not be tempested,
Thou shall not be travailed,
Thou shall not be afflicted,"
But He said,
"Thou shall not be overcome."

—*Mother Julian of Norwich.*

God harden me against myself,
This coward with pathetic voice,
Who craves for ease and rest and joys.

Myself, arch-traitor to myself,
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog whichever way I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,
Can roll the strangling load from me,
Break off the yoke and set me free.

—*Christina Rossetti.*

PRAYER

O God, the unquiet hours have passed. Their tumult has died away. We have come to thy house, shut ourselves within walls that we may shut out the things of other days. Now we find that these walls cannot shut in our restless minds. Do thou, O Lord, put a wall around our minds, that in unbroken quiet we may gaze upon thee and know that perfect peace of those whose minds are stayed on thee.

We need not speak o'ermuch. We feel with one who said, "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." Thou knowest the burdened hearts, the anxious minds, the troubled consciences before thee, the disappointed hopes, the thwarted purposes, the lonely and wounded spirits.

As the earth turns her face to the bosom of night, as the darkness surges softly into valley and glen, as stars steal into the sky, as the hush of evening falls, let the hush of thy presence fall upon us and make us sure of thee.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 4. 1-11; or Mark 1. 12-13; or Luke 4. 1-13.

CHAPTER V

TEMPTATION

OUR last chapter dealt with the baptism of Jesus. We saw that the significance of that event was mainly the sense of serenity and power which came to the mind of Jesus from the knowledge that, in the task of proclaiming the great message which had come to him from God, he, the unique Son, was doing his Father's will and filling full the rôle of the Messiah. It is impossible really to estimate the strange feelings Jesus must have had when he realized that Messiahship. There could only be one Messiah, and that one was bound to stand in a unique relationship both with God and with men. There must, therefore, have been times when the voice of doubt said again and again, "Are you sure?" Indeed, do we not know in our smaller way the paralyzing effect of that voice which, some hours after a glowing religious experience in which faith has seemed to reach serenity, insidiously whispered those same chilling words, "Are you sure?"

As we discuss what we call the temptations of Jesus we are not to suppose, then, that there was one dramatic occasion when Jesus was tempted of the devil and that before and after that the lure of sin left him alone. We read of his affection for those who continued with him in his temptations,¹ and though, as we have seen, he may not have passed through literally all the temptations which can assail man, he was tempted as we are

¹ Luke 22. 28.

at all points of his nature. He was tempted at the point of his power. He was tempted at the point of his instincts. He was tempted at the point of his relationships, and one supposes that the further one gets in moral progress the more numerous are the temptations which assail one, and the more subtle and trying they must be, for the soul has to face conflicts which, in less sensitive days, would not have been seen as conflicts. With a knowledge of the sinfulness of sin and the poignancy of temptation, which is his by right of his sinlessness and his immense moral achievements, he is able to succor them that are tempted. His lofty victories high in the scale of conflicts, for reasons we have already discussed, make him more sympathetic with us than any fellow sinner could be. "One difference there is between the temptations of Jesus Christ and those of other men: his will was at each stage undamaged by the previous admission of sin."²

When we come to discuss what are called the temptations, we must try to realize that the original account must essentially have come from Jesus himself, since he was alone. Evidently, he gave to his men this account in order that they might realize that he was not fulfilling a kind of program laid down before him. But, faced with the problem of getting his message across, it was a real conflict to know which way of activity was most in harmony with his Father's will. We are to imagine Jesus striding away into the desert waste of Jerusalem, beyond all villages, in a great area thirty miles long and fifteen miles across. A land of precipices, burned hills, bare gorges, and scoured ravines,

² Archbishop Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p. 148. The Macmillan Company.

where was no track of man, and where probably, until night was falling, there was no sign of life at all. Then, as the night came down, there would be the bark of jackals and the horrible bloodthirsty laughter of hyenas. We can imagine Jesus resting on some shelf of rock, and gaunt, tawny shapes gathering in the gloom. There must have been wonder in those animal brains as to what this strange invasion of their territory might mean. "He was with the wild beasts." We need not suppose that Jesus was in physical danger from wild beasts. If there were space, it would be interesting to quote case after case of men and women who, because they have shown no fear, have moved quite naturally among wild animals without any sense of danger. Fear is so infectious that an animal picks it up at once, but where there is courage and love and a sense of security with all God's creatures there is no fear.

An Indian friend of mine recently told me an interesting story of a journey he once took with that great saint, Sadhu Sundar Singh. One night the two were the guests of a forest officer and his wife at their bungalow deep in the jungle. My friend and the Sadhu shared the same bedroom, to which, at a late hour, they retired for the night. The Sadhu slept, as was his custom, on the floor. My friend, as he lay down in bed, saw the Sadhu sitting up in prayer and was much struck by what he described as a "faint luminosity" which seemed to radiate from the Sadhu's face. This so interested my friend that he sat up in bed to watch. He thinks now that the Sadhu disliked being watched at his devotions. At any rate the Sadhu left the bedroom, went out through the adjoining bathroom and down the stone steps, used by the water carrier, which led

to the jungle edge. On the bottom step the Sadhu sat to continue his prayer and meditation. My friend saw him seated there, and then, to his horror, he saw a leopard crouching near and ready to spring. My friend tried to cry out but felt paralyzed with fear and could not move or shout. The leopard sprang short. Its head seemed to be touching the Sadhu's feet. Then, said my friend, the Sadhu stretched out his hand and caressed the beast's head and uttered some words which could not be heard. Shortly afterward the Sadhu returned to the bedroom, lay down on his mat on the floor and went to sleep. My friend was trembling all over and for many hours could not sleep. His mind kept turning over what he had seen until at last he decided it must have been a hallucination or he had slept unknowingly and it had all been a dream. Next morning he told the story privately to his hostess and informed her that he supposed it was all a dream. "Not at all," said that lady, "for I saw it too and have seen the same thing happen three times previously when the Sadhu has been staying here." Probably it is not natural for man and beast to be at enmity, so we read that the wild beasts of Thebaid moved freely among the saintly eremites, and Saint Francis of Assisi could call even a wolf a brother.

So Jesus passed day after burning day, night after chilly night, contemplating the possibility of this course of action and then rejecting it, tempted to champion that cause and then letting the thought of it go, and afterward he summed up for his men in what we call the three temptations the story of days and nights of innermost spiritual anguish. "As a treasure is put in a casket that it may be preserved, so the story of those

weeks of mental strife is cast in a kind of symbolism that it might be remembered through days when it could not be understood for the benefit of the days when it could. The truth is half hidden that we may search for it the more, but when we have searched, surely it is plain that here is the record of long days of sifting thought, of patient disentangling of confused issues, of resolute discrimination between the best and the good which is the enemy of the best—all in a region unvisited by man, undreamed of by any of his contemporaries. . . . It needed all the patience and utter sincerity of Jesus himself to control that chaos of possible courses, all speaking at once, to force each to declare itself and be known for what it was.”³

Turn first to the temptation to turn stones into bread. We notice the demon of doubt suggested to his mind—“If thou art the Son of God.” It has been suggested that the stones of the desert in that area suggested the flat loaves which his mother made at home, that Jesus was terribly hungry and knew that he possessed supernormal powers and that the point of the temptation was that he should satisfy his hunger by performing a miracle purely in his own selfish interests. I frankly doubt whether this came into it at all. In the first place, probably Jesus had got far beyond the point where he ever did a single action purely from a selfish motive. If he had wanted food, he could have walked backed to the villages to get it without risking failure by an attempt at meaningless magic. We must remember that he was contemplating how to get his message across to men. He knew the

³ Dr. W. R. Maltby, *The Significance of Jesus*, pp. 23-24. Student Christian Movement Press.

poverty of their conditions. With tender, compassionate insight he saw them slaving day after day to make ends meet, burdened with taxes which, even for his father Joseph, who was not on the poverty line, were crushing. Joseph paid a poll tax that was levied on every person in a home including servants; a water tax, a city tax, a tax on meat, a tax on salt, a house tax, and a road tax. All these taxes were collected by publicans, who themselves paid a large sum to Rome for the right to collect the money and who, therefore, squeezed the uttermost farthing from the poor people whom they dared to persecute.⁴ Jesus knew how hard it is to lift people's thoughts to lofty spiritual issues when they are hungry and poor and worried. They want bread to eat. The heart of Jesus was always compassionate in regard to bread. "Whatever modern criticism makes of the story of his feeding multitudes, it remains that he was markedly sensitive to the idea of hunger."⁵ There are those who tell us that we should never ask for material things. But Jesus inserted in the model prayer, the petition, "Give us daily our bread for the coming day." Would it not be better, therefore—so I believe he argued—to announce himself as a social reformer? He could preach a social gospel and aim at getting better social conditions for the poor people of whom he was one. It would be a popular message; he would get their ear, and then perhaps afterward give them his message about God. "He was surrounded, I believe," says the late Mr. Studert Kennedy,⁶ "by an innumerable phantom host of the

⁴ I owe these particulars to Mr. Basil Mathews.

⁵ T. R. Glover, *The Jesus of History*, p. 121.

⁶ *The New Man in Christ*, p. 194. Hodder & Stoughton.

world's hungry people. He saw them stretching out into the distance like an endless sea: mothers clasping puny children to their dry and shriveled breasts; fathers tearing open their ragged shirts to show the bones beneath their skin, and holding out lean and skinny hands in supplication; while all around him, like the moan of the sea, there went up the cry of a world of want. 'Bread! Bread! For God's sake, give us bread.' . . . If it ought to be done, he had no doubt it could be done. If it were God's will, then there must be God's way. Surely, this was the most pressing and crying problem. Here was the greatest need—to feed the people. Was it any use giving them God unless he gave them bread? How could they worship unless they were fed? Was it not mockery to tell them of a Father's love unless he satisfied their human need? And yet—" Then he turns with that great sentence, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." His answer was surely that men's readiness to listen, men's allegiance, were not to be bought by a promise of better conditions. And in India many a missionary statesman has learned the same lesson. You must not buy people with rice. They take it and eat it, not without gratitude, but unless they earn it and find that harmony of relationship between work, bread, service, and God "the working fellowship of God and man" the problem is no nearer solution. Perhaps it is even further off for the morale may have been lowered.

Following Saint Matthew's arrangement a second temptation is not essentially dissimilar. Still, the mind of Jesus is busy with the question, "How can I get the

ear of the people?" After all, one must make men listen to one somehow. Supposing, then, that one day when the Temple Court was thronged with thousands of people, he had climbed up onto a turret and when all eyes were fixed upon him leaped off the parapet. Was not the verse in Psalm 91. 11 a real promise? "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: . . . they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Would not people then be so convinced that he was different from all other men and so listen to his message and give him their obedience? Would not the whole land rise up and say, "This must be the Messiah"? Would they not know forever that he had come from God? There was already a legend among the Jews that when the true Messiah came he would come floating in the clouds of heaven and descend upon the Temple and reign. And, of course, in this temptation there is crystallized for us a thousand other thoughts that must have come from him. Would it not be legitimate to use his supernatural power to do magical things for the sole motive of impressing the people? And if your motive is only to do people good, is it not legitimate to overawe them into following your way? If the end sought is so good, do the means really matter so much? If you see people rushing to spiritual destruction, is it not permissible to drive them back with all the coercion that would come from the exhibition of superhuman power? With a little imagination we can see the perspiration on Jesus' brow as he fought with this idea that must have seemed so attractive, so alluring—more alluring in those days and in Palestine than here and now with the love of magic which character-

ized the East. But he wins and drives it back. "Thou shalt not test," or, "Thou shalt not make trial on the Lord thy God." They would no doubt follow him, crowd round him as children round a conjurer, eager for more marvels. They would want him to do things for them instead of in and through them and get them out of this hole and that scrape. But these methods would not "prepare the way of the Lord," would not build up the kingdom, would only deceive them as to the hard school of life in which God had placed them, and the nature of God himself.

The third temptation is again of the same order. Perhaps from some point amid the bare hills of that desert place Jesus could see the far-stretching distances of the land he loved so much. A great surge of desire for that beloved land and its oppressed and down-trodden peoples, a flow of patriotic feeling such as we have never known, may have come over him. He longed that the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of his God and of himself the Christ. We may remember too that the word "Jew" is almost synonymous with the word "patriot." Has the history of the world revealed any people so passionately patriotic as the Jews? Here, then, is this young patriot. The red-blood of David, the warrior king, flows hot in his veins. His eyes are on the far horizon and his mind is thinking of the insolent tyrannies of Rome. Here is this young Patriot also, who knows that in his hands are powers which other men as yet have not discovered, that within his reach there is the power to stir up in the breasts of ten thousand men the feelings which burned as a consuming fire within his own. Why not fulfill the expectation of the world for centuries

regarding the Messiah and sweep Rome into the sea? Insidiously again the voice sounded in the ears of his soul: "Power is yours. The whole land is waiting for you if you will yield yourself up to the spirit of domination." It would not be only for himself, not mainly for his own glory. He knew very well that he could make a better kingdom than Rome. People would be happier under his rule than under Rome. There would be justice instead of oppression, there would be food instead of hunger, there would be love and happiness among those smiling fields instead of that dull sullen hate of a ruthless invader. What a glorious cause he might have championed! But he put it away, and long afterward the reason breaks out into his speech. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." His kingdom was not to be won that way, and he put the thought behind him, refusing to worship the gods of this world, whose names are force, violence, war, fame. No, he must worship the God whose name is love, patience, suffering, humility. Only suffering love could cast out the fear that tempts men to force and violence. "Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

That particular battle was over. The cloudy shapes of confused thought, low motive, unpurified desire, short cuts to power, unworthy methods of appeal, and war broke up and disappeared, and the angels of peace and serenity fell upon him. It was clear to him now that he must not buy men with bread or with magic, or with patriotic feeling, and long afterward the author of the fourth Gospel sets down a sentence which lights up the whole of this great battle. "The Son can do

nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." God has never been known to work in the ways which Jesus was tempted to use, and because he saw that the Father never did these things the Son eschewed them also. Tempted he had been without doubt, but temptation is not sin. The thoughts that stand on the threshold of my mind and hammer imperiously upon the door I cannot help. Indeed, I may open the door and confront them there, seeking to know who they are and what their business; but I do sin if, knowing them to be not of God, I stand on one side and welcome them into the living room of the heart. Jesus halted his thoughts upon the threshold, scrutinized them with eyes that searched them through and through, saw them to be the ungodly things they were, and then slammed the door of his mind against them.

All our temptations begin in the realm of the mind. We fall so often because the kingdom of the mind is not safeguarded. Thoughts that are really hostile to our peace elude our vigilance or overcome us in some weak moment and live with us; then comes the fatal consequence, "*Cogitatio, imaginatio, delectatio, assensio.*" The thought, the imagination painting the thought in such alluring colors, the attractiveness of the thought so painted, then at last the fall. Sooner or later our secret thoughts on which the mind dwells, like hidden growth burst through the soil and blossom and fructify in a deed, and by those fruits we are known. "Thou understandest my thought afar off," said the psalmist. With sad heart God watches the thought welcomed into the kingdom of the mind for the first time, when the seed is first sown, long before

it blossoms into deed, long before it becomes even purpose. Thousands of men have wondered why they ever fell into the sin. They are overwhelmed with shame and often with astonishment. It is because they have not guarded the kingdom of the mind. Many a moral battle has been lost, to change the figure, long before the combatant knew that any battle was being waged at all, and, indeed before there was any battle, because the kingdom of the mind had been filled by lurking foes who were never challenged and turned back by an alert and consecrated soul forever on sentry duty.

If the mind is allowed to *think* evil, it is often supposed that no real evil is done, but every physician of souls knows that the imagined circumstances have only suddenly to actualize and evil is done because in imagination it has been done before. There is a habit track in the mind already and the resistances of the personality have already been swept away. Even the daydream which sides with evil in the realm of the imagination has a devastating effect on self-control. "Down among the nerve cells and fibers," says William James, "the molecules are counting it and registering it, storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes." The mind that constantly welcomes evil thoughts is losing now a battle of the future before the enemy has been seen. We must bring into captivity every thought to Christ. Does this thought of ours, this contemplated action, this idle daydream, interfere with our sense of God's peace, or oppose our conception of God's will? Does it have to kill the sentry or drive him away or come to a compromise with him before it can come in? If so, we

must be awake and violent with the violence which says, "Get thee behind me, Satan," for the whole secret of our success in the spirit life lies in our guardianship of the threshold of the mind. We must put the peace of God as a sentry at the door of the kingdom of the mind and let nothing come in which cannot honorably pass. The peace of God must stand sentry over our thoughts and the things we must welcome are those which are pure and lofty and of good report.

When Jesus turned with such violence on Peter and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," it was because he recognized the reappearance of the enemy-thought which he routed in the wilderness. The measure of that violence was the measure of his recognition of the dangerous nature of the enemy trying to creep into his mind disguised as the language of a friend. Jesus saw through the disguise, violently stripped it off, halted it, challenged it, turned it away. We must follow him here with unflagging alertness. Night and day we are in the midst of foes and no man is safe until he is dead.

Saint Augustine prayed, many years ago, "O God, make me beautiful within." It is the only beauty worthy of the name and it is made by the thoughts we think. There is only one kingdom worthy of the name and it is the kingdom of heaven. But is it not also the kingdom of men's minds? For the kingdom of heaven is within us. When all our thoughts and intentions are in harmony with God's will, we shall express them in action. The kingdom of heaven will have *come*.

VI

TRAINING

AT THE CLASSROOM DOOR

Lord, as thy word opens yon door, inviting
Teacher and taught to feast this hour with thee:
Opens a book where God in human writing
Thinks his deep thoughts, and dead tongues live for me.

Too dread the task, too great the duty calling,
Too heavy far the weight is laid on me!
Oh, if mine own thought should on thy words falling
Mar the great message, and men hear not thee!

Give me thy voice to speak, thine ear to listen,
Give me thy mind to grasp thy mystery;
So shall my heart throb and my glad eyes glisten,
Rapt with the wonders thou dost show to me.

—*James Hope Moulton, D.D.*

(Last verses, written at the United Theological College at Bangalore, India, by Professor Moulton, and sent to his brother, the Rev. W. Fiddian Moulton, M.A. Published in *The British Weekly*, March, 1917.)

PRAYER

Eternal Father, we gather in thy house this night to worship thee. Our minds are flooded by many memories: memories of old days in this house when we sought thee here as little children. We come again as little children. There is no other way we dare come. Bless us, we pray thee. Thou wilt not turn thy children away!

And here in this hush other voices call to us; voices our outward ear will never hear again. Keep us faithful to their belief in us, their hope for us. And if any of us have strayed away, find us—indeed, thou hast already found us, else we should not be here seeking thee—and bring us home, as the good shepherd bringeth his sheep. And if the way be too hard and long and rough, carry us like the little lambs upon thy shoulders.

We ask it for the honor of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Philippians 2. 1-11.

CHAPTER VI

TRAINING

To some readers the thought that Jesus ever needed any kind of training will be repellent, perhaps even blasphemous. The divine Son of God, they will say, needs no teaching from men, since he is himself the Source of all knowledge. Such a view of his divinity, however, was not that of the Gospel writers. "Jesus advanced in wisdom," we are told.¹ One in whom all wisdom is conscious at the outset cannot advance in wisdom. Thinking to pay tribute to his divinity as they conceive it, men have invested him with divine qualities such as omniscience. They do not see that by doing this they not only violate the records, but support a false view of divinity by robbing him of a true humanity. No one who was omniscient could live a perfect human life. Omniscience as generally understood would rule out faith, courage, and intercession. Indeed, Jesus asserted definitely that there were things he did not know. "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."² The assertion of his omniscience makes him a play actor. Did he know that a crowd would gather and have a shortage of food?³ When he asked questions, did he only pretend to seek information?⁴ Was his surprise merely as-

¹ Luke 2. 52.

² Mark 13. 32.

³ Mark 6. 31.

⁴ See Mark 5. 30; Luke 8. 43; John 6. 15.

sumed? Omniscience cannot be surprised.⁵ And what is the significance on the lips of an omniscient being of the phrase, "If it be possible"?⁶

Those who have read the first chapter carefully will, I hope, have reached a view of divinity which does not involve the destruction of a true humanity. If it be true to say, as a writer to the Hebrews did, that "He learned obedience," we need not be afraid to say that he learned his lessons just as every other boy in Nazareth did, namely, at the village school.

Later as a young man Jesus probably read the Old Testament books, though, of course, they were not collected together so early as this. It is possible that Joseph possessed a copy of part of it, a roll of the law, the five books of Moses. Some, at any rate, in the circle of friends, would possess copies of the ancient Scriptures and other books⁷ written by hand. The local rabbi also would surely find in Jesus a young man to whom it was a joy to unlock the treasures of the Synagogue Library and with whom to discuss them. Dr. Thomas Walker gives some good reasons for supposing that Jesus belonged to a book-circle,⁸ though the word "book" must be understood to mean a roll sometimes thirty feet long, and supplied with a roller at each end.

Before Jesus left school he would probably know enough Hebrew to enable him to read the sacred books

⁵ Mark 6. 6; Matthew 8. 10; John 7. 9.

⁶ Matthew 26. 39. Compare also on this point Philippians 2. 5-11; Hebrews 2. 17-18; Hebrews 4. 15; Hebrews 5. 7-8.

⁷ Compare the books possessed by the Ephesians (Acts 19. 19), and the reference to the Ethiopian sitting in his chariot reading the prophet Isaiah (Acts 8. 27). Compare Paul and the possession of books (2 Timothy 4. 13).

⁸ *What Jesus Read*, Thomas Walker, D.D. George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London.

in the original. Some of us who have suffered many things before we could translate **בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּרֵאשִׁית** are glad to think that he even passed that way.

But would Jesus be the kind of person who would be content to become a preacher and stand in the place of the rabbis merely as a well-read workingman? Is it not a healthy dislike which we all have of the quack, the man who without adequate training, knowledge, and experience puts himself in the place of those who have passed through ordeals necessary to qualification and arrogates to himself the authority to speak as they do? Would he not be the kind of person to take by intensive study the very best qualifications possible, so that none could question his right to the title "rabbi"? But let us listen to Canon Deane.

One of the most fascinating suggestions made about Jesus in recent times is that made by Canon Anthony Deane in his book entitled *Jesus Christ*, and I am grateful to him for permission to make that suggestion again here and to give some of the reasons which support it.

It is known that three years passed between the baptism and the crucifixion of Jesus, and yet, after the temptation, all the events belong to the last two. There is thus a year of which we know very little and which some scholars have called the "year of obscurity." The first three Gospels are silent about this year, and the fourth Gospel is silent about the greater part of it, except to say that it was spent in Jerusalem or its neighborhood.

Some scholars suggest that the evangelists had no information about this year and that this accounts for their silence. Others think that Jesus began a

ministry in Jerusalem which was unsuccessful and that his lack of success is the cause of the silence. Others again suggest that there was no incident of importance worth recording. It is very difficult to accept any of these conclusions. It is almost incredible that the evangelists should have had no information whatever of the greater part of a year of Jesus' life. To many of us it is quite incredible that his ministry should have been totally unsuccessful in Jerusalem and so amazingly "successful" elsewhere, and when we read Saint Luke's account of what happened when Jesus preached his first sermon in Capernaum, it is asking too much from credulity to suppose that for nearly a whole year not one incident of the slightest interest marked the period.

Canon Deane thinks it is much more likely that the evangelists began with the Galilæan ministry because that was the real beginning of Jesus' public work, and that he spent at least eight months in a rabbinical college in preparation for it. In support of this view he makes the following points:

1. We remember the eager Child in the Temple and the way in which he sat at the feet of the doctors. How the eager questions poured from his lips and how, in his answers, he revealed the unmistakable signs of religious genius! If the opportunity offered, would he not be anxious to take at least a very intensive course before beginning his work as a public teacher?

2. When the Scriptures were read in the synagogue, they were read by the rabbi in Hebrew, and an interpreter stood by and translated the sacred language into the language of the people. In Luke 4 we read

that Jesus turned to the passage in Isaiah and began to read. He is represented there, not as being the interpreter, but as being the reader of the original, which would be in Hebrew, and Canon Deane thinks that the Year of Obscurity may have been spent partly in improving his knowledge of the original language in which the sacred books of the Old Testament were written.

3. Further, to be a religious teacher in Palestine meant to join a clearly defined profession. Jesus was definitely hailed as a rabbi and invited to preach in synagogues. It is exceedingly doubtful whether he would have been treated with this courtesy and given this title, which even his enemies appear to have used, unless he were definitely a trained rabbi. Other rabbis would surely have repudiated him if his credentials were in any way suspect. Again, it was only the rabbi who was allowed to handle certain themes such as prayer, visiting, and marriage. Jesus handled all these themes without criticism from other rabbis.

4. To assume that Jesus was a trained rabbi makes it easy to understand how he lived, for there was a central committee in Jerusalem to which a number of wealthy widows contributed generously, which had the disbursement of funds by which the expenses of rabbis and their disciples were paid, for we may remember that it was a common thing for a rabbi to gather a band of men round him to teach them. Jesus' mode of life is thus shown to be thus far normal. If he were just a wandering preacher, with no authority, one imagines that he might have been driven into the wilderness to subsist on locusts and wild honey as was the case with his cousin, John.

5. Against this position some have said that his opposition to the scribes and Pharisees and to the rabbinical doctrines generally, is a formidable argument, but if Jesus had not been a qualified rabbi, he would have been misunderstood by his friends as well as his enemies as an opponent of the law. We remember that he was most eager to show that, so far from being an opponent of the law, he had come to declare it and to fill it with a greater meaning—not to destroy it, but to fulfill it. His opposition was not to the law but to a travesty of it seen in the imposition of tyrannical burdens demanding scrupulous attention to finicking details.⁹

Passing for the moment from his life to ours, let us realize the great privilege of being given the opportunity to be trained in anything. One can imagine that if Jesus *did* spend a year at college, it would be a year of hard work, grappling with the problems that were set him, striving to make himself as efficient as possible, and nothing that calls itself a virile Christianity can be sloppy about the years of training.

One is rather tempted to criticize, in this matter, some of the religious movements at work in our colleges. That the religious life must not be disregarded during these important and formative years I should be the last to deny; that it is something approaching the heroic to fly the Christian flag in a modern university and dare to be known as a pledged follower of Christ I should be the first to recognize. At the same time most of us have known those who have spent so

⁹ This is, of course, only a very brief and inadequate summary of Canon Deane's position, which is fully worked out in his excellent book, *Jesus Christ*. Hodder & Stoughton.

much time on religious committees and holding religious discussions that they have taken a second-class degree when they might have had a first. It is small consolation afterward to realize that they did good Christian work and that their particular minister is very grateful for the help they rendered, when, for life, one wears a second-class badge instead of a first. Personally, I should be inclined to hold that the first contribution to the kingdom of God of a person at a college or university, or in a training of any kind for a lifework, is—without, of course, forgetting the needs of the spirit—to obtain the very best degree or qualification which can possibly be secured, and then go out into whatever sphere of life one is going to follow, and offer that first-class qualification to God.

One feels that Jesus would work so that his credentials might be scrutinized by anyone and be found to be beyond caviel, and those who have the opportunity to follow him in this matter should surely do so.

Sometimes, as Christianity is taught, it seems to discredit ambition. Personally, I would say, "Be ambitious, as ambitious as you can be, and, as far as possible, achieve the object of your ambition." So long as a life is dedicated to God the more ambitious it is the better, as long as ambition does not mean forgetting our duty to others or becoming callous of their feelings or neglecting the communion of the soul with God. To decry ambition is either to drive it into the unconscious mind so that a person goes on being ambitious while pretending that he is not—a process by which he becomes gradually morbid and repressed—or else a high value is put upon slackness, slovenliness, lack of initiative, and idleness, since, as soon as any

one puts away these four things, he may at once be accused of being ambitious.

In order to link up with our next chapter it would be well to close this one with a picture of Jesus calling his men. Andrew and John, we may imagine, have taken a brief holiday to go and hear John the Baptist preach. While they are talking to John under the trees Jesus passes by. John, with that characteristic humility, says to them: "That is the Man you ought to follow. I am only a preparer of his way." The two men, we may imagine, one of them little more than a boy, set off up the path behind Jesus. Jesus stops and says, "What do you want?" Rather awkwardly they say, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" Jesus says, "Come and see." The scene is so vivid that John, years afterward, can remember the actual time of day. It was four o'clock in the afternoon. They go with Jesus to his room, and afterward, we may imagine, onto the roof top. I imagine Jesus talking to them about his plans, and I can see those two men, especially John, his face cupped in his hands as he lies at full length on the flat roof, listening to Jesus with all his soul in his eyes; listening till the sun goes down in a blaze of golden glory in the west; listening as stars steal into the sky and the night wind comes out to cool the sun-baked earth; listening on through the night perhaps, unable to take his gaze off the eyes of Jesus, feeling his whole being already arrested by the most wonderful face in the world; and then, at last, when the dawn was in the east, rising up, feeling that for him the whole course of life had been altered and that nothing could ever be the same again.

Indeed, part of the miracle of Jesus is that when we

do meet him, life does become entirely different and that he does not call to the few who can go out and adventure with him, but he calls to us all. If our life is bound by household tasks and the care of little children, he knows what that is like, and his mind gives us a place. If we have to work with our hands, he understands, for he did that for eighteen years. If we find it hard to get on at home; if, almost daily, we rub up against people whom we cannot understand and whom we feel cannot understand us, I think we may say that he knows all about that. If we are longing to be at some far greater task and feel we cannot much longer bear the limitations of our existence, he has handled that situation and will show us how to do the same. If we are grinding at our studies, he has had to learn and grapple with problems. And if our sphere widens, so that what we say or write has influence over many lives, we may well remember that he knew what it was to set Jerusalem in an uproar, to have crowds hanging upon the words that fell from his lips wherever he went, and yet to remain meek and lowly in heart. He learned obedience by the things he suffered, and he is perfectly trained to be the Master of our lives.

To some he says, "Follow me," calling us from our tasks and sweeping us out to wider horizons. To others he says, "Follow me," asking for the dedication of our task. He may call a Livingstone from the loom and a Mary Slessor from the mill, but there will be others from whom he will ask that their service, *at* the loom and *in* the mill, shall be their first contribution to the kingdom of God.

What he does ask is the surrendered life from us

all. If we make that surrender, he will tell us what to do. But the first thing is a readiness to obey, and to follow him whithersoever he leads, for his is the way to manhood, his is the way to womanhood, his is the way to life.

VII

MESSAGE

I will go forth 'mong men
Not mailed in scorn
But in the armor of a pure intent.
Great duties are before me and great songs;
And whether crowned or crownless when I fall
It matters not so as God's work is done.
I've learned to prize the quiet lightning deed,
Not the applauding thunder at its heels
Which men call Fame.

—*Alexander Smith.*

PRAYER

O God, we thank thee for the strength of the faith of others. For those who, in the face of their trials, still believe in thee. For some who keep a secret which it would be so easy to share but who bear it alone that others may be free from anxiety. For some who look right into the face of failure, and having failed, begin with indomitable pluck all over again. For some who pass through the deep places of pain and sorrow and refuse to be dismayed. For some who laugh in the face of that grim enemy Death and *know* it has no power to touch the spirit. For some who are in deep trouble, not knowing what the future hath, nor how to make ends meet, and yet who will join in no chorus of grumbling, keep themselves free from cynicism and bitterness and outcry. For some who are concerned about their loved ones, feeling that their hopes are withering under their eyes and yet who will not coerce, or let go, or cease to pray. Make *us* braver and more steadfast, so that we, with them, may face life with quiet hearts, with steady eyes, with cool nerves, and teach us above all things to love, as those who believe that love which goes on loving will always win at last. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Mark 1. 14; John 2. 23—3. 31.

CHAPTER VII

MESSAGE

WHAT message did Jesus preach? We have watched Jesus as far as we could in childhood's days. We have imagined the healthy athletic Youth in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. We have tried to enter into his mind at the crisis we call his baptism. We have watched him wrestling in the desert with evil which we should scarcely have recognized as such. We have contemplated the possibility of ardent months of intellectual training. During all these days there must have been crystallizing in his mind a clear-cut message which he longed to get into the hearts and minds of those hungry, wistful folk who needed it so much. What was this message?

It may seem a queer question to ask. Does not everybody know? Why waste time discussing it? His message now is known throughout almost all the world. Is it? In a sense it is. Two weeks in an Indian jungle village untouched by his power would teach us that. In a sense it is woven into the very fabric of all civilized living. Unacknowledged largely, his influence has brought to civilized life all the more tender and loving aspects of it. Our hospitals were started in his name, our care for the aged, the young, the unfit, the dying, the ill-housed, the unemployed, the mentally disabled derives its dynamic largely from what he was and said and did.

Yet the truth is that his message is so overlaid with

the messages of others that it is not too easy to separate Jesus' teaching from those accretions to it which have become substitutes for it. The gospel of Jesus, as you read Saint Mark, seems such a lovely, romantic, adventurous, simple thing. Not simple to follow out in life—indeed, an adventure requiring all the grit, courage, and self-renunciation of which man is capable—but easy to understand and tremendously appealing. It proclaimed the glorious good news that a man's true life consisted in a twofold attitude. He could look up into the face of God and say, "My Father," and he could stretch out his hand to every one of his fellows, of whatever nation, or kindred, or tribe, or tongue, and say, "My brother." It was a glorious message. There was something big about it. It had the tang of the sea in it, and the strength of mountains, and the loveliness of Galilæan flowers. It was a thing which captured the imagination, set the mind wondering, and yet issued in magnificent activity and service.

We can hardly deny that it has suffered at the hands of ecclesiastics, creed-makers, doctrine-mongers, and committee maniacs. It has become for some bewildering, confusing, wearisome, and complicated. It is as though a lovely sea-bird, meant to mount on strong wings through the tempest, or under clear blue skies, a thing of beauty and strength, meant to gladden all hearts, should be imprisoned in some foul, moldering brass cage, where its feathers would drop off, its eyes grow dim, and where its true purpose could not be achieved. As an instance of this we may note what has often been pointed out: that all children love Jesus, and thrill with the wonder of child delight when their imagination is allowed to realize the stories of what

Jesus was and did. Yet few children like going to church. It doesn't seem easy to a child to connect the two.

I often ask myself what Peter—that fine adventurous, heroic spirit—would say if he should become an attendant at one of our churches for a few weeks. Probably he would be shown into the gallery because his clothes would smell of fish! What would he make of our queer, cumbrous machinery and our innumerable meetings? What would he think as he tried to twist his mind round our elaborate theories and doctrines; as he stood in church and watched people whose souls are smothered with money, singing hymns written by mystics who hadn't any; as he watched men and women who love ease and comfort and selfishness, and to be thought well of by others better than anything else, listening to words read from the Scriptures in our sometimes droning, somnolent voices—words which originally had the sting of heroic challenge throbbing through them? What would he say to our conventional respectability, our complacency, our desire to be on favorable terms with God and get ourselves to heaven?

There are many splendid things in modern Christianity, and I know that the mind must weave itself theories, and work must be organized to be done efficiently; but look broadly at some aspects of modern Christianity, and ask yourself whether we are conveying to people the simple, good news of Jesus. Here is one man who says, as he smites the cover of the Bible: "I believe in this infallible book from cover to cover. Every semicolon is inspired, and there isn't a single mistake in science, history, or fact"—though one re-

calls that it was written by scores of different writers, over a period of more than a thousand years. Here is another man who says, "I belong to an infallible church, which during a checkered existence has, through its Pope, never made any mistake either in theology or morality." Here is another man who says, "Unless you are baptized by total immersion in water you have no right to be considered a Christian." Here is another who claims that a true follower of Christ must attend a particular service which, as Doctor Barnes points out, is said to have extraordinary value for piety and virtue if it is held at eight o'clock in the morning, but which, if held at eight o'clock in the evening, is without authority or value, though the origin of this service was a rite instituted at the close of an evening meal. Here is another man who would refuse to partake of this sacramental meal if the bread were passed to him by some saintly lady. He would only accept it from the hands of a man who put forward the claim, which has never been intelligently substantiated, that he was in apostolic succession to Saint Peter. (And I would like to hear Saint Peter on that point.) Here is another man who places the emphasis on an intellectual creed which only a person with a special theological training could even understand, let alone subscribe to. Here is another man who will seriously tell you that when a certain wafer is blessed by the priest, it will change its substance and become the actual body of Jesus,¹ with a most difficult explanation to prove how it is, and how it is not what it is said to be, irrespective of the consideration

¹ I have quoted some sentences here from my book, *Jesus and Ourselves*, p. 139.

that Peter could hardly have thought of the bread as Jesus' body since Jesus was sitting opposite him at the table.

Jesus stands up among us, tied up in our formalism, our conventions, our creeds and rituals and superstitions, our hymn-drugged souls, our religious retreats from life, and he says, "Follow me." At last it dawns on us that he is not offering intellectual solutions to our problems, or a cushioned dug-out, where we can avoid the hostilities of the universe, or an organization called the church, in the support of which we can avoid any real challenge to our consciences, but that he is offering us a new way of life.

"Jesus came into Galilee," says Saint Mark,² "preaching the good news of God, and saying: 'The time is fulfilled, the Reign of God is at hand. Change your way of looking at life and believe in the good news.'" And what was the good news? That God was Father and all men his sons.

This was good news indeed. In the Old Testament God was like a Father—sometimes. At other times he was a fierce, jealous avenging Deity who would turn the tide on the Egyptians, leave thousands of Assyrians dead on the seashore, and demand the first born from his own particular people unless there were a blood smear on the pillar of the house. To touch his ark was death. He would lead his people if they behaved themselves, but if not, he cursed them with plagues—lice and frogs and boils and poisoned rivers. What a God!

Turn from such a picture to the story of the prodigal son: "And while he was yet afar off, his father

² I. 14.

saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him." What good news indeed! What incentive to change your way of looking at life and thus enter into a fellowship with all God's sons and daughters, and, living the life of fellowship, bring in the reign of God, the kingdom of right relations.³ Sons of God! What tremendous news! Loved by him forever with a strong, tender, everlasting love! The foulest can be made clean, can lift his head and begin again, for he also is a son of God. A new way of life opened in those far-off days which has changed the face of the world.

If people are to enter into this blessed realization-ship, Jesus says, they are to repent and believe; that is to say, they must think their position out again, they must begin to live as sons of God, putting away their sins and living in harmony with their Father with their other brothers. He is not, you will perceive, asking them to believe an intellectual proposition. He is inviting them to enter into an experience. One may put it this way: he does not draw the curtains and sit down at the table under a lamp, with pencil and paper, and proceed to prove that he is right, as one tries to prove a problem in mathematics. He draws the curtain and takes them to the window and shows them that the dawn is in the sky. He is asking their souls to see something rather than their minds to accept something. It is the disclosure of a self-evident truth, not the proof of a difficult theory. Or, to change the figure, he is not proving to them that a fortune has

³ I have borrowed this phrase, "the kingdom of right relations," from *The Stories of the Kingdom*, p. 36, by my friend, G. R. H. Shafto. Student Christian Movement Press.

been left them. He has given them a check book, and tells them to draw checks of any amount and prove for themselves in experience that a fortune—the glory of the liberty of the children of God—is theirs.

From this great truth came many implications, of which we may notice two. The first is the brotherhood of all men. One hates to use so glib a phrase. It is so often used by men whom one knows have no intention of treating their fellows as brothers that one almost recoils from it. But Jesus meant it, and taught it, and lived it. There is no such thing as private, exclusive sonship. If you want to realize yourself as God's son, you will only enter into that relationship as you regard other men as your brothers, and you cannot have the relationship of sonship harmonious and right unless your relationships with men are as right as you can make them, and this relation of brotherhood is to include all races and all peoples.

The second great implication, it seems to me, was the dynamic of love. Jesus believed, and taught, and, indeed, died to prove that love is the only justifiable force in the world, and that love never fails, for what seems to be its failure is the defeat of the forces that oppose it; that there is nothing capable of holding out indefinitely against a love that refuses to stop loving.

One great disappointment Jesus seems to have had. He appears to have thought that this new conception was so compelling that men had only to hear it and they would accept it and live by it. He did not reckon with the hardness of human hearts. This seems to have been characteristic of Jesus. "He *marveled* because of their unbelief,"⁴ we are told. Men's lack of

⁴ Mark 6. 6.

faith repeatedly astonished him, and it may be that some of the sayings of Jesus which suggest that God's kingdom would be established in his generation are due to this miscalculation. Saint Paul seems to have had the same views. For instance, in his first Thessalonian letter he is quite sure that Jesus is immediately coming back to set up his throne in Jerusalem. In his second letter he is more prepared to advise the people to wait. It seems to me that no understanding of the New Testament can do justice to the situation which fails to notice that both in the lifetime of Jesus and of the early Christian Church there was a constant expectation that the reign of God would be visibly established during earthly life of those concerned.

So we may take up the message of Jesus at almost any point and find that what he is teaching is that God is our Father and we are all his children. He exhausts the possibilities of picturesque language to make men believe, or, rather, to make them see; to get this good news into the depths of their being, into their ductless glands. The kingdom of heaven is like . . . the kingdom of heaven is like . . . the kingdom of heaven is like. . . . He goes from one figure to another, desperate to get men to see, and wherever we pick up one of his acts we find that it is a translation into action of this dominating idea that God is Father and that men are his sons.

Let us listen to what he says: "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest," which perhaps we might translate as "self-adjustment, inward harmony." "I am come that they might have Life"—the very thing men want. "Thy sins are forgiven." "I am the bread of life." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that

I shall give him shall never thirst." "That my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

Why, these are the very things men want most now! We must not let the familiarity of the words turn us from the reality of the things. We know that we don't really work too hard. What we need is inward re-enforcement, a sense of harmony, a joyous spirit, a building up of spiritual strength. What gracious promises these are! And Jesus says they are the promises of God for his sons and daughters, promises which God will fulfill through him.

When we read his parables, his word pictures, the wonder deepens and grows. It is as though Jesus is almost desperate to find words to tell us that there is a new world in which we ought to be living, a world of new values, a world which is our Father's home. "You must be born again," says Jesus, as if one were an old man, bent and burdened, with a tired face, lined with care, with wrinkles which mean cynicism and disillusionment, with eyes from which the light has gone; as if we were trudging along a muddy road full of holes, plodding on against a biting wind under a gray, watery November sky, when all the time one might be a child full of health and spirits running in the sunlight, waving its hat and shouting with glee, with face radiant, reveling in the mere fact of being alive in such a world. "Listen how the birds sing," says Jesus; "watch their joyous flight. Don't you think he cares much more about you than about sparrows?"

We must not stay on the parables now, but to read one after another is to watch Jesus turning from one figure to another to illustrate what happens when a

man enters the new world. The joy of a shepherd over a lost sheep, long sought among the cold, bleak, forbidding mountains; the joy of a woman when the coin from her necklace given to her on her wedding day by her beloved as a token of his love is found at last; the joy of a father when his son comes back to his heart after years of fruitless wandering. That, says Jesus, is how God feels about you. And you? Joy of a man back from the foul husks that fill the bellies of swine, back *at home* again in the clean, wholesome world of happy relationships, joy of a girl at a wedding feast, joy of a man who finds a pearl for which all others are well lost, joy of a poor farm laborer farming inhospitable land. Look at him for just a moment. He can't make ends meet. His wife at home is doing her best. But there are little mouths to fill, times are hard, savings have had to be spent, food is scarce on that farm, that bleak windswept barren bit of land on which, for another's gain, he works. Look at his set, gray face, furrows between his eyes—a worried, haggard face. The plow strikes something—another of those wretched stones! No! It gleams. He pulls back his beasts. See his eager hands and sparkling eyes! Gold! Back to his wretched hovel. "Let's sell everything and buy the field." It becomes his own. Food for little ones, a little farm of his own. No more gaunt, hungry days. He's in a new world! "What I can do for you," says Jesus, "is like that."

Have men found his words borne out in experience? When we read on in the New Testament, we find the answer. If Jesus could hardly find words to describe what it means when the kingdom of heaven comes to a man, what about Paul? Listen to his metaphors. It

is being reborn he says. It is being raised from the dead. It is being recreated. It is passing from slavery to sonship, from incredible degradation in outer darkness to a *son* in a family. It is going from darkness to light, from oppression to liberty, from the power of the rulers of darkness to God.

Listen to the flights of the man's language.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. . . . O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. . . . According to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." There is nothing like it in literature. No wonder someone alleges that Doctor Moffatt sat for weeks with cold towels round his head trying to turn this blazing Greek into English.

And not only in his rhetorical flights but also in calmer moods of the soul Paul says the same thing. And if a man says the same thing in depression as in ecstasy, he proves the genuineness of his experience. "O wretched man that I am!" he cries in his letter to the Romans, "who shall deliver me"—not "from the body of this death?" but, literally—"from this body of death?" What does he mean? He is referring, as I have noted before, to the fact that one of the pun-

ishments of a criminal was to have strapped on his back a corpse. Wherever he went he carried this revolting burden. The weight, the stench, the beastliness of it! What a picture it is of sin! Especially some sins. We loathe them. They stink; they are beastly things, yet we cannot rid ourselves of them. They cling to us, seem almost part of us. We groan at their weight and revolt at their beastliness, but we cannot put them down. Through what agency, says Paul, through what power can I be rid of them forever? Then comes this sober sentence—no rhetoric now: "I thank my God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Always the emphasis is on *him*. And every picture, every metaphor, every phrase leaves the same effect of the mind, the effect of a nature brought into a new world, brought in *at once*, and energized to a degree hitherto unknown, so that a man finds self-mastery, radiant happiness, deep inward peace.

I don't mean by the words "at once" that for every man there is a sudden transformation of character. That may take time. The friendship of Jesus works on some men suddenly, so that they never afterward desire anything but him. On others, with many doubts and inhibitions, many inner resistances and pinings for poisoned food, it works more slowly. But the point is that even if a man looks back, he can never be the same again, for he *knows* where life and joy and peace are to be found. He may need self-discipline—will need it—must take care where his mind strays, what it feeds on, and that its lines of communication are kept in good repair; but he has seen and entered into a new world, even that kingdom of God which is within. As a

friend of mine once said, "The rain may come down even in Switzerland, but, thank God! you're no longer in Bloomsbury." And when the rain clouds lift, your face is toward snow-clad peaks instead of slums.

And before we leave Paul, let us mark what Doctor Maltby has often pointed out, that he doesn't alter his message for the most depraved. He doesn't say, "Well, for you it will be different, but begin to crawl away from sin and in a few years you may attain." No! "Put on Christ," he cries. "Reckon ye yourselves dead to sin." "Be filled with the Spirit." "All things are yours." And he says the same to those who are living a respectable, complacent life, the life he lived before his conversion. "All that," he cries, "I count as the scourings of the street compared with knowing Christ and being found in him."

So let me turn to you. Do you suppose Jesus can do all this and mean all this for others and not include you? Why, these men of his who are now called saints, who are all but worshiped by some of our fellows, they were once simple fishermen without a tenth of the start in education, culture, and refinement that you've got.

Look at some of those crushed, cowering lives without any self-respect left. Matthew selling his birth-right to the hated foreigner, hated and despised. You who can read faces look at his hard eyes and cynical mouth. Jesus says, "Follow me," and he comes. Saint Matthew! Why? How? How in the world? "*He* did it," says Matthew; "he showed me a new world and then brought me to it, and I was glad to die for him at last." Mary Magdalene—look at her! Seven devils, she had, so they said. A woman of the pave-

ment—a fallen woman, a dreadful creature, the lowest of the low. No teacher in this world has ever called to his band a woman like that, but Jesus called her, and she came, and his divine friendship changed her disreputable life. Ask her. “He did it,” she says. “He did it. He lifted me up. And I would bathe his feet in my own blood if it would do him a service.”

And this is the refrain all down the years—“He did it. He did it.” Mary Slessor couldn’t cross Sauciehall Street in Glasgow by herself, but she became a White Queen among savage tribes in the heart of a foul jungle. Ask her how! “He did it.” John Wesley was such a funny-looking wee scrap of a Church-of-England parson that he was a joke wherever he went, but once enkindled, once really in the new world, that little man climbed on to his horse and rode through England like a flaming torch, and the dispassionate historian writes, “The man who saved England in the eighteenth century was John Wesley”; but Wesley only says again and again: “He did it.” “He did it.” “He took away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

He can make you hate sin as you hate hell. He can deliver you from it. It can all be true for you. He can give you an inward peace that nothing can break. He can make that gray face of yours light up with a rapture. He can give you back your self-respect. He can help you to self-adjustment. He can put you on top of life instead of underneath it. He can steady your nerves. He can rid you of morbid self-interest and deliver you from fear. He can give you Life!

“Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and

heartly thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life. . . .” Now think of them: health, maybe after many bleak days of pain; home, wife, and bairns; enough to eat, to wear; the roof over your head; . . . friendships, all the blessings of this life—birdsong, flowers, sunshine, the glory of a summer day, holidays . . . all the blessings of this life—“*but above all*, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of this world by our *Lord Jesus Christ*.” Yes, I am not surprised that some of my Anglican friends just can’t help bowing their heads at that point . . . above all, for him, for he has shown them a new world, the kingdom of right relationships with God and with men, the kingdom where love and peace and joy and power fill the heart till the whole universe flames with his glory.

Into that new world he invites you, invites you with his eyes shining with belief in you, in joy for what you have missed so long and are at last to have, invites you with his arms wide open with his heart beating with a love that surely breaks down *all* your barriers, all your doubts, all your fears, all your calculations.

Let there be no compromises, no reservations, no holding back. Let there be a complete acceptance of a proffered friendship. He is able to save to the uttermost them that are come unto God through him. If only they come. That is the message of Jesus. That is the gospel he preached. Jesus believed that if only men would accept the good news and live by it, all problems would be solved; and who can doubt that he was right? If the Jews had set about loving Rome, its enemy, going two miles with the soldier who com-

manded one, giving the cloak where the coat was requested, turning the other cheek, might not even the oppression of Rome have become in everything but language the friendly co-operation of two nations? They thought it absurd and impracticable, but Jesus warned them of what would happen if their own "practicable" policy were pursued. They kept on teasing Rome, and sneering at Rome, pin-pricking Rome, until in 70 A. D. Rome turned upon them and practically brought Jewish history to a close.

So one turns to modern life, from the life of Jesus to our lives. If we turned our energies to establishing the kingdom of right relations; if all the energies spent on protecting ourselves from others and safeguarding selfish interests were turned toward making a world order of brotherly relationships, we should find that there is enough wealth in the world to make all God's children happy and comfortable. Instead of this "some waste their substance on riotous living while others sit in tatters and live like herded swine."⁵

If in our private lives we could only realize that we were in the hands of God, who is, from first to last, our Father, would it not take from our lives all worry and all fear? We should know that nothing could ultimately harm us, nothing could touch our spirit, nothing could swing us out where his love and purposes could not reach us. Life would be filled with a great sense of serenity and innermost security and peace. The sins which do so easily beset us would fall away from us as we increasingly realized how unworthy

⁵ Studdert Kennedy, *The New Life in Christ*, p. 212. Hodder & Stoughton. The whole chapter, "Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone," is a splendid exposition of the practical working value of the Sermon on the Mount for modern economic problems.

they were of those whom God calls son, how terribly they wounded the Father's loving heart.

And in the wider life of which we are part would there be hesitation about disarmament? Would there be a falling off in enthusiasm for those who have never heard of him? Would there be delay in clearing out slums and ending industrial oppression? Indeed, could any public evil remain in a community that *knew* that all men were the sons of God and lived up to that knowledge?

It is nice to dream, but what can we do? We can only, in his name, set ourselves the task of living the life of unquenchable love, really to love our foes and enemies and critics, to harbor no resentments, cherish no grievances, store up no grudges. Fortunately, we are not left merely with a code, with a book of words to follow. We *have* that in the New Testament, but we have something infinitely more precious. We have One in whom that code was personified, who is himself his message. To look at him saves us from two errors. The first is to deduce his message from isolated passages of his teaching.⁶ This would make it possible to believe false things, for instance, about the poor, or military service, or leaving one's parents. The second is to suppose that any particular church or community has fully expressed his message in its teaching and life. It is well to remember that there is no denomination in the world that is anything but a caricature of what Jesus meant the church to be.

We must look to Him who is the inspiration of all the churches, even those which so passionately claim

⁶For example, it is impossible to believe that Jesus ever said, "All that came before me are thieves and robbers." (John 10. 8.)

for him what he never claimed for himself. When I look at him, I *can* believe that God is not only a Father but *my* Father, and that all men are my brothers, even if some are much wiser than I, and others are still, for no fault of their own, little brothers.

And when I look into those eyes which look down from the cross, I can believe that Love is the greatest thing in the world and the only justifiable force in the world. In Jesus then, because only he fully accepted this great message with all its implications, the burning message of God became incarnate and dwelt among us, full of winsomeness and sincerity, full of grace and truth.

VIII

HEALING

One star, one string, and all the rest
Darkness and everlasting space,
Save that she carries in her breast
The travail of the race.

Born thro' the cold and soundless deep
Of ruin riding in the air,
She bows, too heavenly to weep,
Too human to despair.

And ever on her lonely string
Expects some music from above,
Some faint, confirming whispering
Of Fatherhood and love.

One star, one string, and through the drift
Of æons, sad with human cries,
She waits the hand of God to lift
The bandage from her eyes.

—*Harold Begbie.*

(On the picture "HOPE," by G. F. Watts.)

PRAYER

O God, who hast power of life and death, of health and sickness, give power, wisdom, and gentleness to all physicians and surgeons, and to those who treat disease; to all nurses and watchers by the sick, that, always bearing about thy presence with them, they may not only heal but bless, and shine as lamps of hope in the darkest hours of distress and fear: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Mark 2. 1-12.

CHAPTER VIII

HEALING

THERE is not the slightest doubt in my own mind that the stories of Jesus healing men and women of their diseases are authentic stories of real cures. The white light of modern scholarship has been turned upon each one of them, but they have been able to withstand this scrutiny and to emerge with even greater confirmation than they had before. Even if we omit incidents related only by Saint John, we have in Mark and Q (a collection of the sayings of Jesus common to Matthew and Luke without any parallels in Mark) enough material to put the healing acts of Jesus beyond dispute. True, some interpreters have supposed that all these stories are parabolic. That the story of the cure of a blind man is that of the illumination of a man blind in soul; that when we read that Jesus touched the leper, we are to interpret the phrase as meaning that Jesus was friendly with sinners.¹ But such a theory would make nonsense of any record, and our first statement remains. The healing ministry of Jesus is as well authenticated as his very existence.

Furthermore, it is often alleged that the cures of Jesus were all psychogenic. That is to say, they were the cures of illnesses which, being caused in the mind, are curable by what we should call psychological or sometimes purely spiritual healing. And a good many

¹ Compare Worcester and McComb, *Body, Mind and Spirit*, p. 256. Hodder & Stoughton.

elaborate arguments have been adduced to prove that the leprosy referred to was a hysterical skin disease, that the blindness was a hysterical blindness, and so on. Those who would like to pursue this fascinating inquiry should read an able, scholarly, and undogmatic book called *Miracles and the New Psychology*, by E. R. Micklem.² My own conclusion is that doubtless many of the cures of Jesus were cures of what we should call to-day psychogenic diseases. The blindness of Bartimæus, for example, may have been psychogenic. He seems to have been cured by suggestion, which was heightened by Jesus' using the belief of the time that there was a therapeutic value in saliva. The man by Bethesda's Pool and the boy let down through the roof seem to have been cured by unerring and immediate analysis which tracked the origin of the disharmony to sin. Parallels to these miracles could be cited to-day, though analysis is generally a lengthy business. Jesus saw to the core of the trouble immediately. At the same time it is impossible to dismiss them all in this way. In a recent book³ Dr. George S. Marr, a medical man, thinks that the leprosy of the New Testament was what we should call psoriasis; the issue of blood, a uterine fibroid; and the fever of Peter's mother-in-law, malaria. He points out that none of these three can be called functional, neurotic, or psychogenic. At the same time Jesus was not able to cure all illness. His cures did definitely depend to some extent on the faith of the patients or their friends, and our minds may honestly be allowed to doubt whether his success may not have depended on the nature of

² Oxford University Press.

³ G. S. Marr, *Christianity and the Cure of Disease*, p. 29 (Allenson).

the illness. To suppose that Jesus, in a few moments, could heal a broken leg, or a suppurating appendix, would demand a very different conception of the nature of physical laws than at present holds the field.⁴

Nevertheless, we can definitely say that Jesus regarded all disease and illness as part of the kingdom of evil, and very resolutely did he set his mind against it.⁵ He seems, at any rate until there came the embarrassment of success which hindered the even more spiritual aspects of his work, to have regarded the healing of the body as he regarded the healing of the soul, part of his great passionate purpose that men should be whole in body, mind, and spirit. Sometimes by touch,⁶ sometimes by voice,⁷ conveying power from him, a power dependent for its realization on the faith of the patient⁸ or his friends,⁹ sometimes in the absence of the patient,¹⁰ Jesus released an energy which brought about immediately *conditions* of health in place of those of disease. We cannot help noticing, either, that when he commissioned his disciples, in the same sentence he said, "Preach the word, heal the sick."¹¹ Healing, indeed, was part of the message of Jesus. In his first sermon at Capernaum he read the passage

⁴ Compare Doctor Yellowlees, *Psychology's Defense of the Faith*, p. 174. Student Christian Movement Press. "I find it as impossible to believe that God would or could disperse a tumor or destroy an infection by a mere fiat, as to believe that it was in that way he created the heaven and the earth."

⁵ Compare Cairns, *The Faith That Rebels*, p. 6. Student Christian Movement Press.

⁶ Luke 22. 49-53. Compare Matthew 26. 51-53.

⁷ Matthew 9. 20 to 22. 11; Mark 5. 25-34. 11; Luke 8. 43-48; Matthew 9. 18-19-23-26. 11; Mark 5. 21-24, 35-43.

⁸ As in 6. Matthew 12. 9-14; Mark 3. 1-6; Luke 6. 6-11.

⁹ Matthew 17. 14-21; Mark 9. 14-29; Luke 9. 37-43; Mark 2. 1-12; Matthew 9. 1-8; Luke 5. 18-26.

¹⁰ Matthew 8. 5-13; Luke 7. 1-10; John 4. 46-54.

¹¹ "Greater works than these shall he do" (John 14. 12).

from Isaiah which contains the promise of the recovery of sight to the blind as well as of good news to the poor, and when John the Baptist sent to him from prison for authentic evidence that he was the Messiah, his reply was that the blind were seeing and the lame were walking and the poor were listening to the preaching of the gospel.

Without going into the cures wrought by the disciples—cures, be it noticed, which it would be very hard to declare as completely those of functional disease—and without going into the cures of Saint Paul, who had had little or no contact with Jesus in the days of his flesh, we must now ask why this ministry lapsed, remembering that it was carried on by the church for five centuries before it did so lapse. Probably there are many reasons which must be added together. The first is, I should say, that Jesus was a unique Person, and that though such works as he wrought may be on the plane of normal activity for men who live on his plane of communion with God, yet no one has ever lived as near to God as he did or done to anything like the same extent the things he did. Jesus never seems quite to have made allowance for lesser men, expecting them to have his faith in God. He marveled at their unbelief again and again and expected them to live in that world of spiritual power in which he was so at home. I personally cannot avoid the feeling that there were many cures which Jesus could effect which we do not effect because we are not like him. I also leave room for the consideration that Jesus, being God incarnate in a unique sense, could do some things in the realm of healing forever beyond even the most saintly and skilled of the sons of men. This being true, the

probability is, therefore, that the apostles had a large percentage of failures,¹² and that their greatest successes were cases in which what we should now call faith, or its less honorable brother suggestion, was the most powerful therapeutic agency. Then they would be face to face with another dilemma. The art of healing has always been the happy hunting ground of the quack or wonder-worker. In an age of superstition the apostles must have been very worried to find that a good many cures could be effected by magicians who used charms and made no mention of the name of Jesus, or used it without faith in Christ, as one among many charms. They must have had to face the fact that there were cures by means unrelated to Jesus, as convincing as those secured by what they thought of as his power. I imagine that this must gradually have made them lose faith. It is a real difficulty even now. Further, procedures were gradually coming in from the Greek culture, by which the *method* of cure could be demonstrated, and as the outlook of men and women began to be more and more scientific these would naturally begin to take precedence over methods which might or might not be effective, and concerning which no one understood the conditions under which cure was probable. Lastly, we must admit the secularization of the church, her faithlessness in this matter, concealed by the supposition that Christ's healing was due to his divinity and was not to be repeated, and perhaps also by a view which regarded the body as being essentially evil.

¹² I am certain of a high percentage of failures, for if they had a high percentage of successes, their methods would not have lapsed, in spite of what I have written subsequently in the text above. The sufferers would have seen to that.

Will there be a return to spiritual healing? Before we answer this we cannot emphasize too strongly the fact that the mental background has entirely altered. In Jesus' day the mental background was credulity. Given a great person putting his hand upon the body of the sufferer, faith could be called out and therefore a cure often effected. But now the mental background is scientific. Faith would rarely be called out by the laying on of hands. Faith can more easily be called out by a method which appeals to the reason of the sufferer. He will believe in you if you have an explanation of the illness and what the treatment is directed to accomplish. He will not believe in you if you ask him to manufacture belief without any reasonable basis. In other words, the paradox is true, which was not true in the days of Jesus, that among educated people faith is more powerfully called out by a scientific method than by one which asks for credulity.

I therefore hold that there is no future for spiritual healing apart from scientific methods. I hold that there is conceivably a great future for the healing of bodies, even of organic disease, by mental and spiritual means which, by the way, are not more "spiritual" because we do not understand all the laws which are at work. But a scientific foundation produced by accurate knowledge will have to be provided in order to produce in the mind of the modern sufferer belief in the method employed, *unless faith in God's direct activity is exceedingly and, it must be said, exceptionally strong*, or unless an exceptionally strong personality can call it forth.

If I have influenza, I do not rely on faith healing. I send for my physician. My faith is the better called

forth by his scientific treatment than it would be by any faith healer. Why, then, should I turn to faith healing just because I have a disease which science does not yet understand and so make of God a Magician whom I expect to make up for my lack of knowledge or that of my doctor? Unless faith be exceptionally strong, or the person who calls it forth an exceptional person, then if I am going to believe in faith healing, I must, in these days, *know* as much about the mental factors operating and the conditions under which they work as my doctor knows about the medicines he employs to relieve influenza. There must be a scientific background. The day of credulity has gone. How can this scientific background be provided so as to bring faith healing into the area of authenticated and accepted methods of cure? Not, I believe, through Christian Science or the Hickson School or the laying on of hands. All these methods, so far from seeking a scientific basis, ask us to go back to credulity and magic. I see no hope in any of them. They will only be marked by sporadic unexplained cures here and there, many of them temporary, with a high percentage of failure in the cases attempted, and involving much misery because of the lack of rational explanation. One notices that in all three the onus is on the patient. In Christian Science, for instance, if the patient recovers, it is a victory for Christian Science. If the patient does not, it is because he has insufficient faith. Heads, Christian Science wins; tails, the patient loses.

To some extent, and in relation to some diseases, modern psychology provides that scientific foundation for healing by nonphysical methods. It is a common belief now that methods of psychological investigation,

the bringing of buried complexes to the conscious level, the tracking down of repressed phobias to their original sources, methods of suggestion and hypnosis, and all the technique of modern psychotherapy have been the means of accomplishing cures, at any rate in psychogenic disease. We know only too little about the influence of the mind over the body, in the sense that we do not understand many of the conditions by which that power which is undoubtedly there can be released, but we do know enough to say that when it *is* released, he would be a bold man indeed who marked out the limits of its operation. Case after case could be quoted to show that *when the necessary conditions are brought about*, not only is psychogenic disease cured but physiogenic also. Coué provides illustrations of the cure of club-foot; Doctor Marr, in the book quoted above, gives many cases; Doctor Schofield, of Harley Street, gives others.¹³ There is certainly a field of inquiry for the possibilities of scientific treatment based on psychological law and as worthy of consideration as the cures effected through the use of physical law.

The cure of disease in our day, it seems to me, cries out for two things that should be done before we can advance to true mental and spiritual healing. The first is the co-ordination of all known methods of cure. In my judgment it is almost criminal obscurantism that the medical profession, which has done such magnificent work in both medicine and surgery for the relief of human suffering and through whose methods the finger of God is at work, should exclude methods discovered by men of intelligence and good faith because those

¹³ See *Nerves in Disorder*, by A. T. Schofield, M.D., pp. 136ff., p. 159. Hodder & Stoughton.

methods are dubbed unorthodox. There has arisen a Nature Cure Therapy which again and again has brought relief to those who have been labeled by the medical profession incurable. One recognizes gladly that this attitude of the medical profession has extreme value in saving the public from quacks and exploitation. But the quack is the person who practices without the necessary knowledge or experience. It is as important that all the knowledge and skill there is available should be at the disposal of those who are ill as that the latter should be saved from exploitation. At present this is not so. One is reminded of *Punch's* picture of the specialist who had given a patient a few weeks to live meeting him some years later with the remark, "Ah, some quack has been tinkering with you."

Very gradually now, led—as so often in the past¹⁴—by researchers outside the medical profession, the latter is coming to recognize the importance of psychology in the healing of disease.¹⁵ Here, perhaps, lies a possible co-operation between the doctor and the psychologically trained minister which may put "spiritual" healing on a firm scientific basis and bring help to thousands of sufferers.

As I have pointed out elsewhere,¹⁶ there is a type of case showing often physical as well as psychological symptoms in which the root disharmony is spiritual, a disharmony of the soul with God, such as a refusal to accept forgiveness for some past sin, or an inability to realize it; a resentment at bereavement or calamity,

¹⁴ Pasteur was a layman. So was Coué, who more than any other single individual roused the public to the possibilities of suggestion.

¹⁵ Compare Dr. Ernest Jones: "Most physicians are not given five minutes' training in psychology in the five years of their student life" (*Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, p. 302).

¹⁶ *Psychology in Service of the Soul*, pp. 9-28. Epworth Press.

a hiding in religion from reality, a refusal to forgive another, a sense of having committed the unpardonable sin, a longing for the divine peace. In these cases *authority* in religion is necessary and no lay psychotherapist is likely to avail. If I may give my opinion, I much doubt whether a complete adjustment to life is ever made, or complete psychological health ever reached without some relation of the ego with God. Someone, quite rightly, says that Jesus did not distinguish between a case that was a case for one type of practitioner and a case that was suitable for another, and all his healing does point to a new era in the art of healing when the use of drugs and even the use of surgery will pass away. Indeed, if I were asked to make a guess concerning the art of healing in a thousand years' time, I should say that our knowledge of the working and power of the mind and the soul and of the conditions under which those powers operate will have so advanced that the day of drugs will be dead and surgery as we know it to-day will be a decadent art.¹⁷ The *progress* of healing in the future will be along nonphysical lines. But let me make one thing clear about this prophecy. I would underline our dependence on knowledge of the working of psychological and spiritual law, which is the only way such cures will be effected in our day unless *there is a very strong personality operating or great faith in the direct help of God*. And these, in a sense, are themselves conditions under which the forces in question operate.

¹⁷ Lord Moynihan, late president of the Royal College of Surgeons says, "To-day it may safely be claimed that the craft of surgery has in these days almost reached the end of its progress along lines which it has so far followed" (Speech reported in the London press, June 2, 1932).

Jesus had a personality unique in its power, and he labored in an atmosphere of faith, easily roused from a tendency to credulity characteristic of his age. We have neither of these conditions, neither very outstanding personalities nor easily aroused faith. Faith now can generally only be aroused by explanation, and the more scientific the better.

The second great need before we see the era of true spiritual healing is an understanding of the spiritual laws and conditions under which prayer is effective and faith may be born. We must understand—living in the age we do—the scientific conditions operating in the case of a prayer treatment as we understand them in the case of a drug treatment now. “The operation of faith by prayer is no chance, accidental thing.” Its efficacy depends on spiritual law just as physical methods depend on physical law.

In relation to this much hard work and thinking must be done. For example, we do not know much about the nature of faith. Unlike an Eastern native of the first century, we cannot produce faith from a background of credulity. We must know what faith is scientifically. There must be a reasonable, not a credulous, foundation for it or its conditions must be known. This does not destroy faith as some might suppose the advent of science does. My faith in my physician is based on the knowledge that he knows what he is doing, the laws which operate the action, the drugs he uses, and so on. In the future faith in any healer will only be called out when the healer knows what he is doing and the mental laws which operate. Now under modern spiritual healing movements there is a great confusion between faith and suggestibility. Two people

go to a healing mission. One is a stanch Scotch Presbyterian with a trained intellect, with a wide culture, and a deep faith in God. Another person goes who is a young hysterical girl with no culture, no intellectual ability, and an emotional belief in Jesus. The girl is cured; the man is not cured. He is told by the "healer," who so unfairly always puts the onus on the patient, that he had not sufficient faith, with the implication that the girl had. But any psychologist knows that what the girl had was not faith but suggestibility. Her very ignorance makes her suggestibility greater. The Scot demands to understand, and because no explanation is forthcoming his faith is reduced in potency and his suggestibility is lowered.

Therefore, as I see it, there must be not only intensive study of psychology—that is good; we need far more psychologists—but there must be a study of faith and prayer, of the ways in which we can tap spiritual resources and open up our nature to the healing of God, so that we can provide knowledge as a background to faith which is the modern Western equivalent to the first-century Eastern credulity. And in early days of such investigation only certain types of cases are likely to yield to the methods suggested. Until we do that spiritual healing is a leap in the dark. You may get better, you may not, and while this state of things exists, influences like Christian Science, the missions of various healers, Lourdes, and so forth, are too dangerous to be of much value, and in the present state of our knowledge they are not the best treatment we can suggest to our patient, though, of course, all other methods failing, they are worth trying. As things are at present, the best thing we can do for a patient is to

provide for him the type of treatment which the nature of the case demands, co-ordinating all our knowledge for the benefit of those who are ill.

But a vast field of possibility opens up before us. If mental processes can produce a blush, a tear, the flow of a secretion,¹⁸ if, as I have repeatedly demonstrated to medical friends, the mind, under certain conditions, can alter the speed of the heart-beat, the respiration, and the temperature of the body, make the touch of a pencil feel like a red-hot iron¹⁹ and produce an itching urticaria on a patch of white skin, we at least know that nonphysical influences can operate extensively on physical tissue. Who can say that this may not be a way we can fight the dread enemy cancer when we know how to release the energies of the mind? Doctor McDougall's conclusion is balanced and sane: "Successful therapeutic suggestions and others that effect definite tissue changes are especially significant in the present connection; for in all such cases we have definite evidence of control of bodily processes which, though unconsciously effected, must be regarded as psychical. Of the limits of this power of mental control over the organic processes of the body we are altogether ignorant, and new evidence, much of it ill reported, and therefore valueless, but much of it above suspicion, repeatedly warns us against setting up any arbitrary limit to what may be effected in this way."²⁰ A revered minister and physician in my church had a woman patient who came to him with cancer, diagnosed as such by several physicians. She said, "Doctor, I

¹⁸ For example, see *Psychology in Service of the Soul*, p. 213.

¹⁹ See *Psychology in Service of the Soul*, pp. 129-30. See McDougall. *Body and Mind*, pp. 351ff. Methuen.

²⁰ *Body and Mind*, pp. 374-75. Methuen.

think you may help me where others have failed, because you are a minister of God as well." The doctor examined the patient and found her suffering from the cancer of the breast. He said, "If ever I diagnosed cancer, that was cancer." He was sending the woman away when she asked for a bottle of medicine. He knew that no medicine on earth would save her, but he also knew that the power of the mind which believes in a medicine is almost unlimited, and, following a course not unparalleled in medical practice, he gave her a bottle of meaningless fluid. In a fortnight she came back for another bottle, reporting that she felt much better. In six weeks the cancer had gone. Of course the difficulty is that we do not know what conditions of mind in the woman made that possible, and how they can be reproduced in another. Obviously, it would be cruel to deduce that the treatment which worked then is to be recommended to cancer patients everywhere. In the field of functional disorder the power of faith and prayer is beginning to come into its own. In the field of organic disorder we dare not recommend them widely because through our ignorance of the conditions under which faith and prayer are effective, the margin of failure is so wide that we are not offering the patient the most promising line of cure. But knowing even what we do know of the power of the mind, who can say that mental processes cannot shut off nourishment and blood supply from cancer tissue till it sloughs away, and who would say that such methods may not cure many, even organic, diseases and aid the treatment of others? Indeed, one sometimes wonders whether many so-called organic diseases are not spiritual disharmonies with organic

concomitants. Only unless we have an unusual faith and an unusual personality we shall have so much failure as to discredit the method. We must discover what conditions make the cure described above possible and how they can be produced. Science has destroyed credulity. It is up to her to provide a rationale for prayer and faith. Indeed, the church has largely stopped praying because, credulity having been banished, there is no scientific background for prayer, no knowledge of the conditions under which it operates, so that while we pray we are invaded by doubts as to whether it can make any difference. I pray for one man and he recovers. I pray for another and he does not. I do not understand why in either case. Yet the answers to prayer and the miracles of cure which are illustrated in such stories of recovery as we could all give, show what a vast field awaits us.

Given the right conditions, I for one am sure that there is no ill to which flesh or mind is heir which could withstand the healing energies which God means us to tap and use. And working from a very different angle of approach, official medicine is reaching the same conclusion. "No tissue of the human body," says the *British Medical Journal*, "is wholly removed from the influence of spirit." Let me conclude the chapter with another remarkable quotation from the same journal,²¹ a quotation which inspires the hope of closer co-operation between the ministry and medicine: "Nothing in life is more wonderful than faith, the one great moving force which we can neither weigh in the balance nor test in the crucible. Intangible as the ether, ineluctable as gravitation, the radium of the moral and mental

²¹ *British Medical Journal*, June 18, 1910.

spheres, mysterious, indefinable, known only by its effects, faith pours out an unfailing stream of energy, while abating no jot or tittle of its potency. . . . Faith is, indeed, one of the miracles of human nature which science is as ready to accept as it is to study its marvelous effects. When we realize what a vast asset it has been in history, the part which it has played in the healing art seems insignificant, and yet there is no department of knowledge more favorable to an impartial study of its effects."

IX

MIRACLES

All outside is lone field, moon and such peace—
Flowing in, filling up as with a sea
Whereon comes Someone, walks fast on the white,
Jesus Christ's self. . . .
To meet me and calm all things back again.

—*Robert Browning.*

A SUNDAY-MORNING PRAYER

Eternal God, whose spirit so many centuries ago didst brood upon the face of the waters, and from chaos didst bring calm, brood upon our hearts at the outset of this day. Let the mists of our uncleanness, our selfishness, our pettiness, our pride, our sin, slink away before the sunshine of thy love.

Hush our restless, chafing spirits, banish our fretful care with the touch of the infinite calm. May all that is worthy and noble and lovely waken into glorious life within us.

Stir us to the depths of our being, we beseech thee, till deep answers to deep, till every avenue of our being thrills with thy drawing nigh.

May the supreme thing through all the hours of this glad day be that no soul shall come within these walls but he shall feel upon his spirit the breath of God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Read the account of one miracle from each of the sections in the Questionnaire, p. 354.

CHAPTER IX

MIRACLES

IN discussing miracles it is best to begin with a definition. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick gives us one upon which I think it would be hard to improve: "A miracle is God's use of his own law-abiding powers to work out, in ways surprising to us, his will for our lives and for the world."¹ That definition satisfies my own mind because it does not involve either the old traditional idea of miracle or the ultra-modern view of it, neither of which I can personally accept.

Look first at the older view of the subject. Miracle was supposed to be a direct intervention of God by which the laws of the universe were definitely suspended, or held up, so that a special object could be achieved. In a certain Old Testament miracle, for instance, God wanted the Israelites to cross the Red Sea. Therefore it was supposed that he suspended all the usual laws of nature so that the waters could be banked up on either side of the chosen people. Any suggestion that under the wise leadership of Moses the Israelites took advantage of a certain condition of the tides, a condition which has prevailed before and since, was held, by the traditional believer in miracles, to be heresy.

In regard to the miracles of Jesus the position of the traditionalist was that because Jesus was divine

¹ *The Modern Use of the Bible*, p. 162. Student Christian Movement Press.

he had the same power as God to intervene in the laws of nature, which he did from time to time to show his credentials. In other words, the miracles of Jesus were supposed to be marks of his divinity. The miracles wrought by the disciples, the traditionalist believed, were done by a power specially granted them because they stood for Christ and did their miracles in his name. And the cessation of miracles is generally ascribed to the supposition that after the first century there was no need for such exceptional manifestations of divine power.

The position, I think, is unsound, because it involves the idea that the universe got into such a muddle, and the laws which governed it were so inadequate, that at certain points the Divine Ruler, or his representative, had to step in and, as it were, interfere. The implication is, of course, that the laws made by God at the beginning are not adequate to every situation.

When we come to the miracles of Jesus, the traditionalist's view offends us because it represents Jesus as acting in a way so unlike him. We are asked to think of his resorting to supernatural powers, which he alone is alleged to have possessed, in order to work a sign which would dazzle his contemporaries, and present their minds with evidence which they had no power to examine or refute. Put very bluntly, if one accepted the traditionalist view of miracle, one would be forced to conclude that, unable to get his message across on its own merits, Jesus resorted to dazzling tricks to prove his power and make an impression. One may be forgiven for saying that such a spirit is the spirit of blackmail. No one would dare to deny any claims that Jesus liked to make. If they did, he

would resort to some miracle which would disable their argument. It is the spirit which permeates some sections of the Old Testament, where one deduces that if God were not obeyed, a woman might become a pillar of salt; if the ark were touched, the offender should immediately perish. If God were offended, whole armies might be wiped out. This is certainly not the idea, we get from the character of Jesus. It seems to us that in his temptations he resolutely put away from him all thought of any such abuse of power. Nor does such a view explain why he sometimes failed or why he depended on human faith.

Swinging away from this view of miracle, the ultra-Modernist has taken up a view which avoids certain difficulties but which is almost as impossible to accept. Modernism, deeply permeated by the spirit of modern science, and desperately eager to be thought in harmony with it, has supposed that the universe is a kind of closed system of cause and effect working like some vast machine, the parts of which are almost all known and in which everything is governed by law. The Modernist's position, therefore, tends to be one in which the so-called miracles are divided into two classes: (1) Those marvelous happenings for which science could give an explanation, and (2) those which baffled science as at present known. Concerning the first the Modernist said: "These are not really miracles; science understands them." Concerning the second the Modernist said: "Because science cannot understand them they did not happen. They may be later additions of copyists, or they have been misreported, or the reports have been tampered with. We cannot receive them as they have come down to us." "Nothing can

be accepted," said the ultra-Modernist, "if it is outside the uniformity of nature."

This view was a healthy reaction from traditionalism, and it did at least conserve three points which are worth remembering:

1. That belief in miracles is not vital to belief in Jesus.

2. That miracles are not part of the evidence of his divinity.

3. That room must be left for the undoubted fact that the reports of what happened had to pass through the medium of the minds of those who wrote the record, and that the reports may to some extent have been colored by the medium.

At the same time the Modernist theory is inadequate because it makes nonsense of faith and prayer. What is the good of praying for my child's recovery if prayer does not alter anything, if she is caught up in a great machine the parts of which are known and in which known effect follows known cause without any possibility of influence from without? Further, it leaves out faith. How can we have faith if all things in the universe are parts of a great machine whose running can be perceived and with whose action nothing can interfere? In reply to that, it was said by some that "faith operates in the psychic and spiritual sphere but not in the physical." But if this is a *universe*, what right have we to affirm law and uniformity in nature in the physical world and not in the psychical and spiritual? I can remember hearing ultra-Modernist preachers say that the value of prayer was the reflex effect it had on the person who prayed. "It cannot alter anything," said those preachers, "except your own reaction to life."

This is not only a very anæmic and poverty-stricken kind of prayer, but it makes nonsense of the teaching of Jesus in regard to prayer. What is the good of praying, "Give us this day our daily bread," if the only possible result is that we are strengthened to bear the pangs of hunger with greater fortitude?

Professor Cairns, in his volume, *The Faith that Rebels*, a magnificent contribution to our subject, and one which has greatly cleared my own mind, rejects both the traditional and the Modernist views, but proceeds to take up a position which, to my mind, is untenable. He suggests² that our obsession in regard to a law-abiding universe is overdone, that our conception of the uniformity of nature is a delusion, and he affirms a passionate faith in the possibility of miracle, not regarding it as a divine intervention, since there is no reign of law to be interrupted, and not holding a Modernist view of the universe as a great machine. As I understand him, he would suggest that the laws of the universe—though he does not use this figure—are the habits of God. God generally works in this particular way, but that, like ourselves, he often does, in response to prayer and faith, break a habit and act in an unforeseen way. He says: "What is the origin of this rooted conviction that, however chaotic she may appear, Nature is really orderly, which makes us assume this and stick to it in spite of constant frustration? To point to the advance of science and the gradual discovery of order in those parts of nature where the hypothesis of uniformity has been put to the test, and to argue that therefore the same uniformity will be found everywhere else, is to beg the whole question.

² Page 115.

We can show no sufficient logical reason at all for our faith in the universal uniformity of nature. Who can tell but that beyond the relatively small mapped-out region we may at any moment come upon tracts of pure chaos?"

It would be very presumptuous on my part to disagree with so eminent an authority. Nor do I think I do so in spirit, for I desire to guard the same precious truth—that we live in a world in which miracles can and do happen and in which faith and prayer are operative. At the same time I would prefer to say that all is law; that there is, if you like, a closed system all within a circle of law, but with the circle drawn at infinity, so that while nothing happens that does not happen in obedience to law, there may be a million laws as yet not known to us. Or there may be unknown combinations of known laws which produce effects which appear to be a rupture of law but which are really illustrations of laws or combinations which we do not yet know. One is reminded of some very ancient words of Saint Augustine. "We say," he says, "that all portents," by which he means miracles, "are contrary to nature, but they are not so. For how is that contrary to nature which happens by the will of God, since the will of so mighty a Creator is certainly the nature of each created thing?"³ Professor Cairns uses a phrase which is so illuminating that it is worth paying the price of his book to have that one sentence. He says: "The universe is not like a gauntlet of steel; it is like a silk glove." And one might add, "a silk glove with the hand of God inside it." I quite agree, yet the movements of a hand in a silk glove are

³ *The City of God*, Bk. 21, Chap. VIII.

all law-abiding, and if we trace the impulse of the fingers up the sensory nerves to the sensory center of the brain, across to the motor center and down the efferent nerves, there is action that is purposed, but all is within the realm of law. This is a fact to be kept in mind.

I should like, if I can, to suggest an analogy which I have come to feel is rather near to the truth. We must get right away, of course, from the idea of the world which supposes that it is rather like a clockwork toy, which God has wound up, and that now he sits back in his heaven and watches it go. Is not the whole universe in the same relation to God as a man's body is to his mind? The analogy is not so wild in the light of modern physics as it may sound, for even what we call dead matter, apart altogether from living trees and flowers, seems, in its essential substance, to be directly influenced by forces that we must label spirit. Take the analogy for the moment, though it breaks down in that the man here is ignorant of the power of his own mind. Here is a man living for a certain number of years in a certain relationship with the known laws of nature. Learning these laws he learns that fire is hot. That a hot iron blisters the skin. In his experience the only way of blistering the skin is by bringing it into contact with something very hot. One day this man agrees to be the subject for a psychologist who wishes to give a demonstration of the power of the mind over the body. The man is hypnotized. While under hypnosis he is told that a pencil is a red-hot iron. The pencil is allowed to touch his flesh, he gives a loud shriek, the arm is bound up with a sealed bandage, and when the bandage is removed, a

blister has formed on the skin.⁴ Those who look on, and, indeed, the subject himself, might be forgiven for calling it a miracle. Is not this a holding up of all the laws of nature which he has ever perceived? Yet we know that it is no breaking of law, but the use of psychological laws largely unknown to the general public. If the mind of man can produce in his body certain effects which do seem a contradiction of law but which are really the fulfillment of laws not yet understood, then when we turn to this great universe and think of it as the body of God in the sense of being his medium or manifestation, or one such medium, shot through and through by the power of his mind which controls it, then what may not be the effect of the mind of God when its energies are released upon what we are pleased to call, in our ignorance, the uniformity of nature? Let us realize that the sense of compulsion that this must be, and that must be, because this effect must follow this cause, is really an infirmity of our human faith and thought. Two great facts must be brought into consideration. The first is that there may be ten million laws, *especially in the psychic sphere*, of which, as yet, we know nothing, which may profoundly affect even the physical world just as the mind of a man can affect his body. And, secondly, room must be left for the emergence, through unknown laws, of new entities, the new existence of which will profoundly affect the environment into which the new thing is born. One such emergence was that of life on this planet. Another was that of the conscious mind of man. The incarnation

⁴ For a fuller description of this experiment see my *Psychology in Service of the Soul*, p. 129. Epworth Press.

and resurrection of Jesus may have been other such emergences.

I believe that Jesus worked miracles in the sense we defined at the beginning of the chapter. I do not believe that any of the laws of the universe were broken by any miracle which he performed. For to break law suggests a universe ultimately unreliable, the laws of which we could never learn, a universe, therefore, that would be more terrifying as a chaos than as cosmos, since it could never be relied on. On one day a flame might burn, and on the next freeze. And, secondly, if laws were suspended, the universe is dubbed inadequate as God thought it in the beginning. I should hold, not that Jesus broke law, but that he revealed its width and wealth. I cannot believe that the miracles of Jesus are to be regarded as proofs of his divinity, not only because his followers did things similar to those which he himself did, but because many of the things he did are being done now by people whom we certainly do not suppose are doing them in virtue of divine power. When divinity was conceived of in terms of magic, it is natural that magical acts should be supposed to prove divinity, but such acts have no evidential value to-day. The power to heal a leper is not a mark of divine power. The pure desire to heal a leper is. And we must look for our proofs of divinity not in miraculous acts but in moral character and loving desire.

The miracles of Jesus, then, were part of his message. They were the evidence of the full life to which God means his children to attain. He did not work them to prove this or to prove that. He did them because he could not help doing them. I recently read

a book which says, "Jesus worked miracles (1) to reveal himself, (2) to create belief, and (3) to manifest the glory of God." I fear there is little value in such a classification. Jesus lived in a universe so much bigger than ours—though I think he teaches that we *ought* to live in it—in which the energies of the spirit were so much more real and apparent, that when he met the forces of darkness, disease, and suffering, he did not stop to say: "Shall I show this man my power? Shall I evidence my divinity? Shall I reveal the nature of God? Is this a worthy case? Had not this man better suffer a little longer in order that he may learn some spiritual lessons?" None of these things came into consciousness in Jesus. There was a great compassion and a great love, and all the powers at his disposal were brought into use to banish anything that belonged to the kingdom of evil. If there is any "explanation" of miracle, it lies in the quality of the spiritual life of Jesus. The miracles were all normal acts of a Person living on that plane of communion with God and at home in his Father's world. May I stress that word "normal"? If you go out in the street and see a child fallen into the gutter, you don't say: "Shall I show this child my power? Is he worthy of my love? Would he be a better child afterward if he suffered a little first?" No! If it is in your power to help him and he needs help, it is a normal act for you to help because your heart is kind. So with Jesus. Miracles were normal acts *to him*. As Drummond said, even of the greatest miracle of all, the resurrection, "What if it were the normal thing for a sinless man to rise from the dead?"

At the same time we must be allowed to have a crit-

ical mind and to fit some of the miracles into the framework of law as we know it to-day. For we have realized that if we could explain all the miracles in terms of law, we should not discredit Jesus or lessen our conception of his divinity. And no doubt there is a point in the opinion of those who hold that to some extent the miracles were written up by writers who believed that magic was a proof of divinity.

Personally I should not quarrel with you if you said that Jesus may not really have turned water into wine. After the pots were filled with water the courteous host may have said to his Guest, "In your company the very water tastes like wine." It only needs servants going through the room chattering in the kitchen and saying "He has turned the water into wine," for the story to get abroad. You may, if you like, deal with the stilling of the storm by saying that there are often sudden storms on the lake which die down almost as soon as they come up, and that Jesus' words, "Peace, be still," were directed not to the waves but to the men in the boat. You may say, if you like, that the feeding of the five thousand was not a miraculous multiplication of food, but that Jesus took the five loaves and two fishes which the little boy who had come out for a day's picnic contributed for the use of his hero, and told the people that if they would only share the food they had among them in the spirit of this boy, there would be enough; that the whole story is a parable in action showing that where there is the spirit of sharing there is enough for all. You may take all the healing miracles, if you like, and say they are all illustrations of psychological laws not yet investigated. You may say that Jairus' daughter was not dead, and indeed,

Jesus said she was not. You may say that the widow of Nain's son was in a trance and that the story of Lazarus is a legend. Personally, I welcome ways of looking at the miracles which bring them more within the realm of known law and less within the realm of unknowable magic. Nor do such so-called explanations lessen to me my estimate of the power of Jesus. They are just as miraculous in the sense we defined miracle even if we understand them. The wonder is that they happened when and where they did. The trouble with the miracles has been that we have been so sidetracked by considerations of their marvelous nature, and thinking men have been so incredulous that traditionalists and Modernists alike have missed their meaning and inner significance. There is only one thing which I hold we have no warrant for saying. We must not say that any of the miracles are impossible. For what *is* impossible, when on and through the body we call nature, made up, like our own, of electrons, atoms, and molecules, there is a mind operating like the mind of Jesus? A mind which did not necessarily *know* in a scientific sense the forces and laws which we do not know, but a mind which, by calling out faith, and by strong prayer and love, could release the energies of the universe, energies the power of which we have never dreamed.

I remember in Mesopotamia hearing of an Arab chief who bet a large sum of money that no one could get a message to Basra quicker than his best horse could go. The test was actually carried out and the Arab Sheik was allowed to decide what the message should be. The operators must have smiled as the Morse instrument tapped out a message in ten seconds which the

fastest rider in Mesopotamia could not bring to Basra in almost as many hours. There are only three questions which we can apply as to whether any particular miracle of Jesus happened or not, and those are: Is it significant? Is it like him? Is it relevant? These are the questions that matter. We can explain miracles if we like, hold some of them *sub-judice*, say that some of them are highly colored, say the men who wrote them are not the same men who saw them. The only thing we cannot say on the evidence is that they are impossible. Even knowledge is quickly opening up a world in which things incredible to our fathers are happening after their scientific bases are known. But Jesus says there is a key which opens up a world of marvel and power before the scientific bases *are* known, not that things have no such bases, but that we need not wait to know them before the energies are at our disposal. And the name of the key is faith. There is a kingdom of spiritual energies into which we have never entered and of whose power we have never dreamed. To believe in miracles does not really mean always to be demanding that God, as our fathers used to say, should intervene with a display of magic on our behalf. To believe in miracles means to set no limits to the things which prayer and faith can accomplish: to enter into God's kingdom ourselves, and to be so full of his power that men find it easier to believe in God because of us, and enter themselves into that kingdom which Jesus never dreamed should be entirely closed to all but him by virtue of his unique relationship with God, but which he declared open to all the sons of God. "Greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." It cannot be

otherwise than disappointing to Christ that heirs of the wealth of the Kingdom should be such paupers; that because of lack of faith and believing prayer, because of an obsession with regard to science and law, because of confusion of thought and much sophistication, miracles are seldom even expected. As we said in the last chapter, where there is strong faith and a strong personality there is no need to wait for the knowledge of the laws operating. Are we not invited to achieve both? When we do that, God uses his law-abiding powers to work out, in ways surprising to us, his will for our lives and for the world.

X

TRANSFIGURATION

He came and took me by the hand
Up to a red rose tree,
He kept His meaning to Himself
But gave a rose to me.
I did not pray Him to lay bare
The mystery to me
Enough the rose was Heaven to smell,
And His own face to see.

—*Ralph Hodgson.*

(From *Poems of To-day*, Second Series, p. 164.)

PRAYER

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly, grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldest have us to do; that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—*W. Bright.*
(From *Inner Light.*)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 17. 1-13; or Mark 9. 2-13; or Luke 9. 28-36.

CHAPTER X

TRANSFIGURATION

A CLOSE reading of the gospel narratives shows, I think, that there was a gradual changing of Jesus' own conception of his Messiahship. At first he believes that the vision of the nature of God which he has come to reveal, with the implications of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, is so glorious and so true that all men must accept it, not only the common people, but the leaders of thought and religion as well. I think that at first Jesus never dreamed that that message or the Messenger could be rejected. It was such good news, such transforming news, that surely men would welcome it everywhere. It purified religion, it revolutionized individual life, and it also solved the national problem, for if the truths which Jesus taught had been applied, the Romans would have been turned into friends by the sheer victory of good overcoming evil, and the Kingdom would have come in the lifetime of Jesus, and I think that is what Jesus confidently expected at first. As we watch him we feel that he is laying his plans not for repudiation, but for acceptance.

Then Jesus sees the hardening of hearts. The scribes and Pharisees withdraw into the corners to discuss him. They are suspicious, distrustful, fearful. They see at once that if he is right, they are wrong; that if he is proved right, they are proved wrong; and that, therefore, all they stand for will come down in

ruin. They are not prepared for the necessary drastic readjustment of thought and attitude in matters of religion which his demands make. Who is he to teach them? Therefore they weave their suspicion and dislike into a net of corporate hatred big enough to ensnare him and encompass his death.

There gradually opened before Jesus only three alternatives: to fight, or to flee, or to go on until the powers arraigned against him did their worst. He could not fight, because to do so would cut right across his own teaching and principle. If he went on and dared whatever might happen, he might easily have been murdered by some hired assassin of the scribes and Pharisees before he could establish his teaching. There seems to me little doubt that for a time he was a fugitive. It comes to one with something of horror that Jesus Christ for months together was a hunted man.

The restraint of the gospel writers rather obscures this point.¹ It is noteworthy that the gospel writers never used any adjectives about Jesus. They never say how brave he was, or courageous, or heroic. For instance, you read four words like these, "Jesus came into Galilee," without the heroism behind those four words. To go into Galilee meant to go straight into Herod's territory; to repeat what the Baptist had said at a time when the Baptist was in prison for saying it. It was a deliberate challenge to Herod, and many of the apparently quiet journeys with the disciples were not leisurely preaching tours but forced movements to escape the emissaries of Herod. It may

¹ The point has been clearly brought out by Doctor Glover in *The Pilgrim*, and by Canon Deane in *Jesus Christ*.

have been, as some writers think, that Jesus made his home at Capernaum instead of Nazareth, because Capernaum was on the opposite coast and outside the jurisdiction of Herod. Further, the boat which served him as a pulpit from time to time had surely a deeper significance. In a few moments he could be rowed out of Herod's power to harm him.

But life on the terms of a fugitive could not go on forever. There came a time when the dilemma was silence or death. There came a time when he began to see that the only way in which he could establish his message was to die for it; to challenge all the hosts of evil, to let the scribes and Pharisees do their worst and to rely on God to vindicate eternal values in his own way. I think we may say that these thoughts were in his mind just before the transfiguration. In all the first three Gospels the account of the transfiguration is immediately preceded by the declaration, "The Son of man must suffer many things, . . . and be killed, and after three days rise again."² Saint Luke says that the subject of conversation between Jesus and Moses and Elijah was the "decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."

So we may imagine him toiling at eventide up the lower slopes of Hermon with the main peak towering beyond him lifting its massive head nine thousand feet toward the stars. Having gained the summit of one of its spurs, he stops to pray. Words he had always loved are singing in his heart. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

² Matthew 16. 21-28; Mark 8. 31; 9. 1; Luke 9. 22-27. It is in these sections that the words occur "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. . . . He that keepeth thee will not slumber . . . nor sleep.”³ Far in the west glows the last gleam of sunset, pale green behind the mountains. Tremblingly the stars steal into the sky. Silently the darkness surges in to valley and glen below them. Like the peace of God on a troubled heart night descends upon the hills. All through the long day the mountain has sweltered in the burning sun. It has longed for the quiet hours of night as wearied eyes watch for the morning. And now, all silently, there steals down upon it, a long white fleecy cloud. Very quietly the cloud, like some great mantle put by a tender mother’s hand about her fretful, fevered child, gathers around the mountain’s form and it is as though the mountain sighs with some deep inward content, and turns to sleep.

And He, who made it, kneels upon its warm heather to pray. He is so young to die. His body is strong, not old and weak and ill. His nerves are steel cable, not frayed and shattered with pain or worry or age. His hold on life is strong, so strong. Can it be that the only way he can prove his love is to die? Thoughts of life and love and laughter race through his brain. He can see the village street of Nazareth. He can hear the soft voice of Mary that caressed all his babyhood. He can hear the laughing voices of boys at the games they played together. He can see the eyes of John, his close friend, full of worship and wonder. He can hear the ring in Peter’s voice, “Thou art the Christ, the Messiah, the One who should come and deliver our nation.” Life is very rich, very sweet.

³ Psalm 121. 1-4.

Dear God, how sweet! Blue-and-gold mornings among the wild anemones on Nazareth's peaceful hills. Moonlight nights on the lake thinking thoughts of God while his men fished. Birdsong and sunshine. Starlight and the hush of evening. Health, friendship, the love of little children and the great message yet to be more and more fully declared. How *can* he leave it all, give himself to derisive Pharisees, cool, cunning, calculating enemies who will kill him and say: "There you are; nails will kill him just like anyone else. It has just been one other in the list of religious and political uprisings, and our power has put it down like the rest? It will all be forgotten in six months."

Jesus' eyes are wet with tears. Great convulsive sobs agitate his breast. He bows himself lower till at last Mother Earth, that great mother of all flesh, takes his prone form and gathers it to her quiet breast, and Night, like some great, pitying angel, stoops lower and lays her cool hand upon his flushed brow. The Great Serenity possesses him whose name is God. He knows that Pain and Death can be his angels.

Only one thing further he needs—some comforting assurance that all will be well, some voice of evidence that all that has passed has not been wholly and solely in the world of feeling. He lifts his face. Serenity has become radiance. From the eternal world there streams into him the Light that never was on sea or land. It shines in his eyes. His face glows. His very clothes are luminous. And the assurance he needs is at hand. There appeared unto them Elijah and Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.⁴

The disciples have been asleep. They have walked

⁴ Mark 9. 4.

far and stumbled up a mountain in the dark. The warm heather was too much for them. They wake to see that transfigured Face. They are at the verge of the universe which, as yet, man cannot bear. Ghostly presences terrify them. They fall on their faces and are sore afraid.⁵ Practical Peter stammers about three shelters. It is cold on the spurs of Hermon before the dawn. But not for ghosts. And not for Jesus, charged still with that inner fire which makes man forget his body.

The mists of dawn kiss the mountain awake. Another long, hot day begins. But before the mist clears a voice has spoken in the hearts of three men: a voice they will never forget. They have seen enough. No outward voice is needed. Within three hearts is a certainty as strong as steel. God put it there. "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him."⁶ The day has begun. He is with them again; in *their* world. It is time to go back to the plains and face—epilepsy. But he is not quite the same. A certain preoccupation possesses him, a new line is in his face, a grim determination that somehow frightens them. He speaks about his death. They don't understand. "And they were afraid to ask him about this saying."⁷ His face now is set like a flint to go to Jerusalem.

Let us turn aside from the narrative for the moment to look at our own lives, for we are considering our lives as well as his. We are considering ours in the light of his and trying to understand the significance for us of his mastery of the art of living. Sometimes

⁵ Matthew 17. 6.

⁶ Mark 9. 7.

⁷ Luke 9. 45.

when things are on our own minds, we either seek to banish the uncomfortable thoughts by doing other things, or we worry about the situation, using up the energies of the mind in a wasteful way which does not help us at all. Worry is like racing the engine of your car without letting in the clutch. You are using up energy but not driving anywhere nearer the goal. Or, to change the figure, worry is putting your head under the bedclothes because a shadow on the ceiling looks like a ghost. To spread the whole thing out and to decide what must be done if this or that happens, is to go back to the first illustration, to let in the clutch, and to go back to the second, to turn up the light. How often we push uncomfortable thoughts away, lie in bed tossing restlessly, trying to evade them by taking aspirins, or counting the sheep jumping over a gate, desperately trying to keep the mind from paying any attention to them! Indeed, our friends say to us, "Put it out of your mind." The Master spent a night in quiet meditation, and put it into the center of his mind, set it all out before God and found, as we should find, that to confront our fears is to banish them, that to face the things that worry us is the only way to rob them of all power to harm us. And sometimes, when some great problem harasses the mind, we should retain a serenity we do not believe possible, and should act far more wisely if we did a thing which would surprise our friends—take a day or half a day off and get alone with God and boldly face all that dismays us. We should come down from such a mount of solitude, probably not with our face transfigured, but, at any rate, with our heart at rest.

But what of Moses and Elias? No doubt, as Jesus

toiled up Mount Hermon contemplating how best he could serve his beloved people, his thoughts would naturally turn to those two outstanding leaders of Old Testament days who had dedicated themselves to the task of delivering Israel—Moses, who despised a royal palace to follow his voice, and Elijah, that gaunt hero, who dared to challenge all the hosts of Baal.

“And did they really come to him?” you ask. I see no reason to doubt it. Some have said that the story has been written up, that the disciples were asleep, and that the account could never have come from Jesus, for how could he know that his face was shining with an inner light? But we must remember that Luke, the doctor, says (9. 32), “When they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.” What if it should be perfectly normal for such a person as Jesus, in need of counsel, to be able to commune with those who have gone, concerning such a tremendous issue as that which Saint Luke calls, the “decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem”?

Modern spiritualism supports the possibilities of the situation, if such support is needed.⁸ Those who go into darkened rooms, illumined only with a small red light, who seek the assistance of mediums in order to get in touch with the dead, are not, I think, to be scoffed at. I think for many people it is a dangerous practice, dangerous to their mental balance,⁹ but we must keep an open mind on this matter and be slow to scoff either at the manner or the substance of some

⁸ Compare Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The New Revelation*, p. 79.

⁹ Compare the whole argument of Doctor Mercier's *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*.

messages said to be received from the other side. I should regard it as absurd to say that spiritualism cannot make any contribution to our modern thought on this subject, or that the evidence is not very strong indeed for communication with the dead.

At the same time a story like the transfiguration does make me ask whether nearness to God, if we gave ourselves to such discipline as that involves, or deep and sincere desire, would not mean nearness to the saintly dead. I do not think that, on those levels of the mind, there would be a communication either by a medium's voice or the tapping of a table, but there might be a communion in which the language was thought, telepathically conveyed.¹⁰

I will content myself with two illustrations of what I mean. Doctor Boreham, the Australian author, somewhere tells the story of a boy who was exceedingly fond of his father. The boy was the best bat in his school cricket team, but his father was blind. The boy often longed that his father could see him play, and the father, indeed, glowed with pleasure to hear the remarks of those who could see his son, but he felt the deprivation keenly. One day the old man suddenly died, and on the following Saturday a great match was to be played in which the boy was to take part. The school was plunged into consternation because it was supposed that, owing to the death of his father, the boy would not play. But, to their great delight, he said he would play just as usual. That day he batted as he had never batted before. He made over a century and was the cause of the match being won by his side. When he got into the pavilion,

¹⁰ I have worked this idea out in my book, *After Death*, pp. 108ff.

after having walked through the cheering crowds, a school friend said to him, "You played the greatest game of your life this afternoon." The boy replied: "I could not help playing like that. It was the first time my father ever saw me play."

Conversations with friends have made it quite clear to me that there are very few people who have not had some such experience. What I should call the uncertain things in spiritualism are evaded: the uncanny atmosphere, the intervention of others, the curious nature of some of the messages. At the same time the main things that spiritualism promises are assured. The sense of separation is rendered less acute, and there is a sense of being able to consult those on the other side and to learn their wishes.

One experience of my own, among many others, stands out clearly. The first time I was invited to preach at the City Temple I was extremely nervous about this ordeal. If I may say so, preparation for the pulpit is of two kinds, intellectual and spiritual. The intellectual is not difficult. You can at least prepare beforehand something that you feel contains a message. The great task is to be so spiritually at your best that God can use you to convey that message to your hearers. It is supremely important to be in the right mood. For that reason physical health must be watched. A preacher who misuses Saturday risking his fitness on Sunday, mentally as well as physically, spiritually as well as mentally, is letting both God and his people down. The Sunday morning I was to preach at the City Temple for the first time was my birthday anniversary. I shall never forget sleeping in London at the house of a Wesleyan minister friend in a room

right at the top of the house. I awakened with an almost overwhelming sense of the presence of my mother, who passed away years ago when I was in India. There was nothing uncanny in the experience; there was no communication with her in words, but there was a tremendous sense of radiant joy. As I think back it seems as though the room was full of sunlight, but if I subsequently learned that the house faces west or north, I shall only believe that the sunshine was within instead of without. I shall never forget that sense of exaltation, that sense of well-being. I knew that I was going to have a good time. All fear was taken away. I cannot use a word like transfiguration. I can only speak of a heart that sang and a spirit that was in ecstasy. I am quite serious when I say that such an experience was for me far more significant than I should have had, if, for instance, a message had been tapped out for me by the leg of my bedside table.

The church has always held tenaciously the doctrine of the communion of saints.¹¹ "God forbid," said Saint Augustine about his mother, Sainte Monica, after her death, "that in a higher state of existence she should cease to think of me, to long to comfort me, she who loved me more than words can tell." And I think it must be a very unimaginative person who, to put it no more strongly, has not felt a sense of presence when the mind, with self excluded as far as may be, thought of, or needed the help of, those who have gone. Perhaps we ought to think of them more. Footballers can play much better when the stands are full, actors can act better when the house is crowded, preachers

¹¹ See *After Death*, pp. 121ff.

can do better with a full church than with empty pews. What if, though nearer than we know, watching us with the loving desire which would inspire us to greater efforts, there were the vast hosts of those who serve Him day and night in the spirit temple of the eternal world? "Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high."

Perhaps it is not fair to put forward our little earth experiences as any clue to those of Christ, and yet I think he would not mind if our doing that helps us to understand him. A new light shone upon his way. He entered into a serenity and peace and well-being which made him know that all would be well. The presence of those two great leaders made him sure that what God had wrought through them he could accomplish again through him. Perhaps they told him that the unseen world was enthralled by the great drama which Jesus was about to enact.

I think we must spare a look for Peter. Do you notice the symptom of a distressed mind? It is always the sign of a distressed mind that it intuitively knows that relief is to be found by the activity of the hands. When you lost your dear one and there was all that sense of the uncanny which possesses us while the body, from which the spirit has passed, still lies in a darkened house, have we not found again and again that to do our work, especially if that work is manual work, is a healing medicine for the soul? Even to wash up and to make beds and prepare meals are ways

of easing the distress of the mind. Peter had a glimpse of the universe we could not bear, so he blurts out, "It is good for us to be here, but let us make three shelters: one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." "For," says Saint Mark, who probably had it from Peter himself, "he wist not what to say, for they were sore afraid." "Let me do something with my hands." We may see another very beautiful illustration of the same thing in that uncanny moment when the daughter of Jairus, thought to be dead, sat up again. Turning to the harassed, if overjoyed mother, whose nervous tension we can hardly measure, and can only glimpse if we try to ask what we should feel like if a dearly loved one, thought to be dead, sat up again, Jesus said, "Go and get her something to eat."

The transfiguration was a wonderful experience for the disciples as well as for Jesus. There was a new measure of certainty. A voice came somehow to consciousness: "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." The disciples were sworn to secrecy, perhaps because Jesus wanted, with that characteristic restraint of his, to appeal to them without the coercion of evidence from another world such as the transfiguration experience provided. But when the cloud kissed the mountain peak and then lifted, leaving Jesus only visible, that was not the end of the Transfiguration. Jesus comes straight down to a multitude surrounding an epileptic boy whom his followers had been unable to cure, and with stern words about men's lack of faith, the boy is brought to him and cured. Let us also receive that lesson. There are to be big experiences for us. We are to be allowed the serenity which comes

from spreading the things that worry us before God. There is the opportunity of guidance from and communion with those who have gone. But when all is said and done, to withdraw to the mountain is to withdraw from life as life is. It is only justifiable if we take what we gain on the mountain back to the multitude, and serve it with all those added powers which have come to us. The life of the monastery and the convent receive scanty support from the life of Jesus. He withdrew to pray, but only that he might serve the better. True love looks up into the face of God, that it may be the more able to look into the face of man and see the divine sonship in the most degraded. Love revels in the glory of the ideal, but is then willing to encounter and serve in the dust of the actual. Love stretches one hand up to God, but with the other never leaves go the hand of man, so that joining its hands in prayer it may bring them together. And we need to be aware that religious emotion which is never expressed in the life, the climbing of a mountain of prayer say, once a week, on a Sunday evening, but never expressing what we have experienced through the life of Monday morning, is to make the very manna of heaven to decay, to turn a tonic into a drug, a drug which can effectively put the soul to sleep.

For some the quiet of a service is their mountain of communion; for others the joy of walking alone under the stars or in the solitude of a wood or in the hush of the hills; for others a quiet room with shaded lights and the red glow of a fire. For every soul there must be some quiet moments of meditation and prayer. Where the body is, matters little, so long as it allows the soul to escape to its mountain; that mountain where

the world of the unseen becomes real and the next step becomes more plain. But the test, which decides whether it is drug or tonic, escape or preparation, training or anæsthetic, can only be made in life's common lanes and dusty streets.

XI

TRIUMPH

My garden has roses red,
My garden has roses white;
But if when the day is sped
I stand by the gate at night,
One fragrance comes, when the day is dead,
From my roses white and my roses red.

The roses of joy are red,
The roses of pain are white;
But I think, when the day is sped
And I stand by the gate at night,
I shall know just this, when the day is dead,
That a rose is sweet be it white or red.

—*Percy C. Ainsworth.*

Lord come away;
Why dost thou stay?
Thy road is ready and thy paths made straight
With longing expectation wait
The consecration of thy beauteous feet.
Ride on triumphantly; behold! we lay
Our lusts and proud wills in thy way.
Hosannah! welcome to our hearts: Lord, here
Thou hast a temple too, and full as dear
As that of Sion; and as full of sin—
Nothing but thieves and robbers dwell therein;
Enter, and chase them forth, and cleanse the floor,
Crucify them, that they may never more
Profane that holy place
Where thou hast chose to set thy face.

And then if our still tongues shall be
Mute in the praises of thy deity,
The stones out of the temple wall
Shall cry aloud and call
Hosannah! and thy glorious footsteps greet.

—*Jeremy Taylor.*

PRAYER

O Love, who takest not possession of our hearts except by our own desire, win us, thou Saviour of our lives, from homage unto what is big and violent; show us the power of that which suffers and entreats; give us protection from all spiritual harm, triumph over all material hurt by faith in unseen forces; and let us find our freedom in surrender unto thee, who wilt not break our wills but dost appeal to them, through Christ the Crucified. Amen.

—From a devotional page in *Reconciliation*. (No author given.)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 21. 1-11; Mark 11. 1-11; Luke 19. 29-44; John 12. 12-19.

CHAPTER XI

TRIUMPH

THE story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is not, I think, the story of a tired man who wants to get to the capital and who borrows a donkey to do so. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that no act in the whole of Jesus' life was more deliberate, more purposeful, more carefully planned, than this. We saw in the last chapter that there were three possibilities before him, to fight, to flee, and to face the hostile powers arrayed against him. The moment has come when, in a very definite sense, he must face his enemies.

No one in Palestine knew the ancient prophecies of the Coming One better than Jesus knew them. He knew the words that are written in Zechariah.¹ "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." We cannot be sure that the majority of those in the crowds that day realized the significance of what was being done, but it is certain that Jesus did, and equally certain that many of the religious leaders did also. Jesus had arranged beforehand with one of his secret disciples that as soon as two of his own men came with the password "The Lord hath need of him," the colt was

¹ Zechariah 9. 9. A form of Hebrew parallelism which does not denote two animals. Matthew, always striving in his Gospel to see prophecy literally fulfilled, talks of two animals (Matthew 21. 1-11). Mark, Luke, and John speak of one animal only.

to be at his disposal. His riding into the city was a deliberate assertion of his Messiahship and a deliberate challenge to the authorities.

Yet, though Jesus chose this method to indicate the nature of his arrival in the city as the Messiah, there must have been many things about that so-called triumphal entry which Jesus did not like. The crowd is madly excited. Like all Orientals, the people loved the theatrical. They had tried to stage him like this all along and greet him as a King, but he had always evaded them. Now, not only does he concede what they have wanted for so long, but has himself arranged its detail, and when they cry, "Hosanna, blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord,"² he does not silence them. Indeed, when the Pharisees call upon him to rebuke his disciples, he says, "I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." Hitherto by many a lesson, hard to understand, he has impressed on his disciples that his kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. He has withdrawn from their enthusiasm. But now he seems to be behaving as a Messiah, a Deliverer of the people, ought to behave. He is going to ride into the capital. Perhaps, they must have argued, his former attitude was a pose. Perhaps he has been waiting his own time to reveal himself as King. To our Western eyes it may seem curious that a king should choose an ass on which to ride, but we may remember not only that the ass of Palestine was a large, and often fine animal used even in royal processions, but also that, according to tradition, when kings went forth to war they rode upon horses; but when they went on peaceful errands they

² Luke 19. 38.

rode upon asses, and the ancient prophecy makes the King of Zion ride upon an ass because he was the Prince of Peace.³ The Judges of Israel, we may notice, rode upon asses. The prophet Daniel pictures the Messiah coming with the clouds of heaven.⁴ The rabbis used to say that this could only happen if Israel were righteous; otherwise, he would come riding upon an ass.

We may watch him then, with set and rigid face, riding on his last journey toward Jerusalem, only two miles away. People pull off their outer robes, they pull off the lower branches of the date palm which are easy to tear off and are within reach from the ground. Both are laid on the ground before his feet. At last they imagine he is going to take his power and reign. The whole of Jerusalem is agog with excitement.⁵ Stories of the raising of the dead and of the mighty works done by Jesus have thrilled the city. Possibly some of the crowds, camping on the countryside in order to attend the feast, crowded down to the road to see him.

Then, as I imagine the scene, something happens. We know that the road, as it gets near to Jerusalem, becomes very steep as it follows one of the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. I think Jesus then slipped down from the ass's back. I cannot imagine him riding up a steep hill even though he were tired. Then the road turns very sharply northward. Suddenly there flashes on the vision the gilt-covered domes, the marble turrets, the graceful minarets of the great city glittering in the afternoon sun.

³ David Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*, p. 391. Hodder & Stoughton.

⁴ Daniel 7. 13.

⁵ Matthew 21. 10.

When they saw it, we can well imagine the multitudes shouting out with yet louder cries of triumph. Soon would come the great moment for which they had waited. There lay the splendid city waiting to receive her King. But the shouting becomes less vociferous. There is a sound of sobbing. You can imagine some of them enraged. Who is this who sobs and is spoiling this joyous occasion? Perhaps some push their way through the throng to find out, determined to send this "ghost of the pageant" about his business. When they get to the front of the procession, following the direction of the sobs, they find it is the King himself. He is sitting on the low wall at the side of the road, and the gentle beast that had carried him is, with a beast's instinct for sympathy, rubbing its velvet nose against his shoulder. This is not all imagination. "When he was come near, he beheld the city," says Saint Luke⁶ "and wept over it." And the Greek word for "wept" is *ἐκλαυσεν*, a word far stronger than the word used to describe Jesus weeping over the grave of Lazarus⁷ (*ἐδακρυσεν*). At the grave of Lazarus we may say Jesus wept silently, or shed tears, but when he saw Jerusalem, the word used is our word "bewail." I should translate *ἐκλαυσεν*, "He was broken down with sobs," and through the sobs came these words, "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall . . . not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." At the beginning of

⁶ 19. 41.

⁷ John 11. 35.

the procession the Pharisees were terrified. They had no idea he was so popular. No doubt the pilgrims gathered for the feast from all over the land would in many cases be people who had listened to Jesus in their own neighborhood. They would not be slow to join their plaudits with the crowd. The Pharisees realized that here was a man who had power within his fingers to rally the whole nation around him in a revolution against them. Indeed, one need not be surprised at the nervousness of Rome. On that day the enthusiasm was so high and the numbers who had come up for the feast so vast that even Rome itself might have found it difficult to deal with the situation. It would not have been the first or the last time that the power of Rome was temporarily swept out of Jerusalem. If they saw his tears, it must have been to the great relief of both the religious and the secular authority, and one can imagine the curl of the lip and the sneering nostrils of the former, the sense of profound relief of the latter. This is evidently not a king who need be feared. In his hour of conquest he cries. His very triumph has turned to tears.

Why did Jesus weep? Some have claimed that he foresaw the details of the fulfillment of the prophecy he uttered regarding the destruction of Jerusalem. My own interpretation of this would not be that he foresaw it so clearly that he knew what could be the only outcome of the spirit which possessed the minds and hearts of the stubborn ecclesiastical leaders of the day. His beloved people, simple, lovable, impulsive, generous-minded, would be led by their proud, obstinate, crafty rulers as sheep to the slaughter of an

exasperated Rome. Nor can I exclude the possibility that the immediate future of the nation may have been in part disclosed to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration by Moses and Elijah. This, of course, can only be speculation, even though, in part, based on Saint Luke's words, they "spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." But it is not incredible that those who spoke to him from the unseen world may have revealed to him some of those things which in our earth language we say are in the future, but which, in a timeless world, are not any more future than past. This would account for the detail of the prophecy so remarkably fulfilled. If Jesus did foresee the story of the siege of Jerusalem, no wonder he wept! In 70 A. D. Titus laid siege to the city, and the horrors of that siege stand, I think, unparalleled in all history. Very soon all available food had been consumed. Husbands snatched the last morsel from wives, wives from husbands. Many women killed, cooked, and ate their own children. When Titus got in, he stripped their priests naked and cast them to wild beasts. He desecrated their Temple, slaying men and women who clung to its altar till the Temple courts ran red with blood. Fires fed on the cedar wood inlaid with gold. People, mad with fear and hunger, leaped into the flames. Others fought like tigers for grass and nettles and the refuse of the drains. Thousands were crucified "for jest" on crosses which stretched for miles round the city. More than one million one hundred thousand people perished. There is no narrative in the world so awful, so full of horrors, as Josephus' story of the siege and fall of Jerusalem.

Others think that Jesus' tears were caused by his

profound disappointment in not making himself understood by the people. They would shout "Hosanna," but their allegiance was only for a few theatrical moments and would not last. Here we must be very careful not to do an injustice to the Galilæan crowd who cried "Hosanna." Dr. David Smith says,⁸ "A few days more and those very mouths which were shouting 'Hosanna' (which means 'save us') would be clamoring, 'Crucify!'" As Canon Deane has pointed out,⁹ this is inaccurate. "The people who paid homage to Jesus were not the same people as those who cried, 'Crucify him!' The former was a Galilæan crowd composed of Galilæans coming from the north to keep the Passover. The procession began at Bethany, two miles away, and thence escorted Jesus in triumph into the city. The inhabitants of Jerusalem had no part in the demonstration." They were startled by it and demanded, "Who is this?" (Matthew 21. 11), and the answer came, "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." We may conceive that the Galilæans in the presence of the Jerusalem crowd were not prepared to say, "This is the Messiah, the King." They merely said, "This is the prophet," though they took pride in saying that he came from Galilee. It is worth noticing also that the Prætorium in Jerusalem is still to be seen, and its forecourt would only hold a few people, who would not only be dwellers in Jerusalem but probably would be all picked people, some of whom were ready enough to shout "Crucify!" since they may have been driven out of the Temple precincts when Jesus with his whip drove out the animals, or else

⁸ In *The Days of His Flesh*, p. 393. Hodder & Stoughton.

⁹ In *Jesus Christ*, p. 202. Hodder & Stoughton.

they may have been coerced into shouting what the powerful Temple rulers instructed them to shout. So far from being fickle, as has often been suggested, the Galilæans actually prolonged the life of Jesus from Palm Sunday to Good Friday, for they were the people referred to in the sentence "The scribes and priests sought to lay hands on him, but they feared the people." And but for the impetuous mistake of Judas that fear might have saved the life of the Master for some considerable time, for the feelings of the general mass of people might be said to have been a mixture of devotion, love, wonder, some hesitation, some indifference, some skepticism, and perhaps some derision, but not hatred. The actual enemies of Jesus were never numerous, but, though few, their power was enormous.

No, that dreadful outburst of sobbing, I think, may be understood when we realize that Jesus was a great patriot and loved his people and his land, and he knew that he would be rejected. He knew the working of that awful law by which sin and pride blind the eyes of the soul, and the knowledge was behind the sentence, "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

The poignancy of sin's penalty is not so much anything that happens to us from without but the spiritual blindness which creeps upon us from within. The things which belong unto peace are hidden from our eyes. In another book¹⁰ I have called it the law of porosis, and it works its dreadful consequences for the individual as well as for the nation. When I fall into a certain sin for the first time, I may stand aghast,

¹⁰ *After Death*, p. 35. Epworth Press.

horrified at it. When I fall into it the second time, I am not more aghast but less, not more sensitive but less. If I go on sinning long enough, I cannot see the things that belong to my peace at all and I cannot see sin as sin. The conscience that once shouted, "*This is wrong*," now only whispers, and in the end may be silent altogether. Sin, as Martineau saw, is unique in all God's universe in that the more you practice it the less you know its nature. Conscience is not enough, and the people who say that you need no religion and can follow conscience do not realize that the easiest thing in the world is to let the conscience become hardened, or to drug it with a lie, or to stifle it with repeated sin, or to drown its whispers in prejudices, and that it will not shout at you when most you need its warning, but that that warning voice drops off to a mere whisper and in the end dies away.

Surely, it was the spiritual blindness which even he was impotent to heal which caused the tears of Jesus. Indeed, does any father know a greater agony than that of watching his child suffer and yet of being unable to ward it off, unable to remedy it, unable to lift the burden and carry it himself? "God," he cries out in anguish, "if only I could save him, if only I could bear it for him!" Such was the anguish of Jesus. Blindness was bringing upon them disaster from without, but more awful disaster from within. For the tragedy of the blind man is not that he trips on the curb and meets tragedy from without, it is that he cannot revel in the world of sight. Sunset and stars, sunshine and flowers mean nothing to him. And the tragedy of the man who is going spiritually blind is not any kind of hell which people may tell him

awaits him in the next world, but the fact that he is growing more unconscious, day by day, that there are such realities as God and goodness, self-sacrifice and holiness. Christ was concerned with what men suffer. He was even more concerned with what men lose.

In fact, I doubt very much whether there is any hell imposed upon us from without. The only hell is the hell we make for ourselves. The hell of the miser is not outward punishment but the fact that the only thing there is in his universe is money. The hell of the pleasure-seeker is that pleasure is the highest good he knows. The hell of the sensualist is that in all God's universe there is only a burning and insatiable lust left for him to enjoy. Hell is to be in a glorious palace full of music where music is the only reality and to hear nothing, to be in a universe full of beauty and see nothing, to be at an endless feast and have no appetite. And between the worldling and the saint is a "great gulf fixed." Two men may sit in adjoining seats at an organ recital but if one is a musician and the other almost deaf, how great and how fixed is the gulf between them!

If we look into our own lives, even we can get an echo of that awful sense of impotence which possessed the soul of Jesus. It is no good telling such people that they are not happy, that they are dissatisfied. The tragedy is that they are satisfied and they are happy. The penalty of seeking only for pleasure is that you can be satisfied with pleasure. The things which belong unto peace are so hidden from you that you do not believe in peace. Go up to some pleasure-seeker who is wholly given up to worldliness and tell him that he is not really enjoying himself, that he is not

really happy, that fundamentally he is not really satisfied. He will tell you that fundamentally you are a fool. He *is* happy. He *is* content. But the tragedy and the penalty are that this is the only way he knows of being happy. All higher ways are becoming closed to him, and he cannot be happy in any other way until God opens his blinded eyes.

It is surely because of this terrible work of the laws of the spiritual world that sin and its consequences are so terrifyingly portrayed by Jesus. The modern tendency is to pass it by and to lay the emphasis on the more tender side of divine love. We must not forget the dark line in God's face. It is not enough to soothe oneself with an "all-will-come-right-in-the-end" sort of attitude. A famous Frenchman, gayly said, "God will forgive, that is his business." In my hearing, quite recently, a man said, "After all, God must be a good sort." To talk like that is to misunderstand the nature of reality and the spiritual laws of the universe. The world of nature is a hard school in which the lawbreaker, even through no fault of his own, can suffer horribly. The world of Spirit is not less hard and relentless and exacting.

The words of Jesus frighten me—as they should do. They awaken me—as they were meant to do. I am not nearly so awakened and frightened by Saint Paul, though his language is vehement enough. But what arrests me and brings a feeling of awe to my spirit is this: The most awful things that were ever said about sin were spoken by the gentlest lips in the world, and in this sense also, "if it were not so, he would have told us." The doctrine of hell has been grossly exaggerated and distorted by our great-grandfathers, but

do not let us forget that the origin of the doctrine of hell is the language of Jesus. I think I am right in saying that the pre-Christian Jews did not believe in a hell anything like as terrible as our great-grand-fathers, and though I support all those who say that the doctrine of hell, as they taught it, was a vulgar and blasphemous superstition and the words that Jesus used were literally pressed to convey ideas he did not mean to convey, yet Jesus did not use words which were meaningless. He meant *something* by "the closed door," "the outer darkness," "the age-long fire." I will content myself by saying that in my own opinion Jesus believed that for a man deliberately to turn his back on God and close his eyes to the facts of sin till he became blind to them, was for that man to bring upon himself consequences which were terrible beyond our present knowing. The words of Jesus to which I have referred are in all the Gospels. No higher criticism explains them away. If I explain one figure, I am met with the next. If I construct wild interpretations, I cannot avoid knowing that everyone of them stands for something, and something awful. It is not so much inflicted. None of God's punishments are. They are part of the nature of things, and the soul brings them on itself. And I see the measure of that awfulness in the violence of his words. I see it in the depths of his love. I see it in the passion of his tears. The cross itself is the only plummet that sounds that depth to the bottom, and no one knows how deep that plummet goes.

I may neglect the things of the spirit for a time. I may refuse to use the eyes of my soul. I may wrap round them the blinding bandage of the body, or pleas-

ure, or money, or fame, or lust, or any form of selfishness, and throughout my earth life I may not know how blind I am. Perhaps no voice ever succeeds in showing me my true state, in wringing from me that passionate cry, "Lord, that I may receive my sight!" But let me realize that the Angel of Death with one gesture will strip that bandage away. I shall find, though it be for the first time, that I am blind, and naked, blinking and shivering in the eternal blaze, groping and falling, so that even in a world where God is the only reality I cannot see him. Glorious music may be going on, but I cannot hear it; high feasting, but I have no appetite. Hell is not a different place from heaven. As Omar Kháyyám tersely put it, "Myself am heaven and hell." To be in hell is to be in heaven without the power of enjoying it because the spiritual faculties are dead; to be in the immediate presence of God and not to know that there is a God; only to be aware of one's own naked shivering soul in an infinite loneliness and a deserted universe. Then when I am utterly broken, there must begin all over again that age-long painful task of God with myself, the task of remaking the soul.

Let me finish the chapter on a more comforting note. Some years ago a cowboy heard the story which has been the subject of this chapter. He listened very carefully and then said, "What wonderful hands he must have had!" Those who were present said "Why do you say that?" "Well," he said, "a man who can sit on a colt on which no one has ever sat before, and master it, and guide it, and soothe it when people are shrieking 'Hosanna' in its ears, and waving palms before it, and throwing clothes in front of it, that man

must have wonderful hands." Shall we not let him master our mulish, obstinate, undisciplined lives? We have tried to control them ourselves. Most of us have failed so often that we know that by ourselves we shall never succeed. But Jesus has wonderful hands. Those who have asked him to take control of their lives know that those hands are strong and tender to guide. And they look upon those hands with a great and ever-growing wonder, for the nail-print of love's uttermost is upon them.

XII

SACRAMENT

Like summer seas that lave with silent tide
The lonely shore;
Like whispering winds that stir the forest tree
So calm before.
Like still small voice that with the eventide
Calls us the more,
Like childish hands that seek in vain the key
Of fast-closed door;
So is thy coming unto us, O Lord.

Like storm-tossed barques, that when the breakers foam
Steal into port;
Like starving souls that crave the needed bread
Once common thought;
Like prodigals that seek the Father's home
By wanderings taught
Welcomed with kisses for the tears we shed
Meriting naught;
So is our coming unto thee, O Lord.

Like flowers that turn in worship to the light
Of sunshine fair,
Like trees that bend obedient when begins
The tempest's blare
Like harps that wake in music of delight
Melodies rare;
For all our stubbornness, our pride, our sins,
Our selfish care
So would we be to thee, O Lord.

—*Rev. E. Carvan Young.*

(Poem based on a prayer in Dr. Orchard's "The Temple.")

PRAYER

Grant, O God, that because we meet together here this *morning*, life may grow greater for some who have contempt for it, simpler for some who are confused by it, happier for some who are tasting the bitterness of it, safer for some who are feeling the peril of it, more friendly for some who are feeling the loneliness of it, serener for some who are throbbing with the fever of it, holier for some to whom life has lost all dignity, beauty, and meaning. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Source Unknown.*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

I Corinthians 11. 23-26; Matthew 26. 17-30; or Mark 14. 12-26; or Luke 22. 7-30.

CHAPTER XII

SACRAMENT

As we try to reconstruct the events of the Last Supper we find again that everything has been carefully, and even secretly, arranged by Jesus himself. Jesus tells two of his disciples to go into the city, where there shall meet them a man bearing a pitcher of water. They are to follow him and he will lead them to one described as "the goodman of the house." We must remember that Jesus has been living a hunted life, and he is determined to eat his Passover within the city, as custom required. He will not be assassinated in the dark. He will choose his own time and his own place. He, therefore, has to take elaborate precautions lest he be murdered before, in his own words, his time has come. He has made an arrangement with one of his secret disciples in the city, who was probably the father of Saint Mark. The secret sign for the disciples is that of a man carrying a pitcher of water. Mr. Basil Mathews¹ has shown what a clever sign that was. Carrying a water jar in Palestine is always thought of as a woman's work. A person who had lived for thirty years in Palestine had only on two occasions seen a man carrying a water jar. Yet it is a thing any man could do without calling special attention to himself, since a man might be without any women folk to fetch water for him from the spring. Mark's father, therefore, has sent one

¹ In his *Life of Jesus*, p. 381.

of his men slaves to carry a water jar and to wait for the disciples. We may imagine, then, the two disciples passing through the gate. A man lifts a jar on to his shoulder; he looks keenly at the two travelers and they at him. A gleam of understanding passes between them. The man puts his finger to his lips, turns his back on them, climbs up the steep way that ran northeast into the city. Soon he turns down an unfrequented lane, turns and looks to see if the disciples are following, then passes through a courtyard, across the courtyard and up some steps, where the goodman of the house meets them. The disciples say, "The Master says, 'Where is my guest-chamber where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?'" Saint's Mark's father shows them the large Upper Room furnished and ready for Jesus, and the disciples enter it and begin to prepare the meal.

We must try to see this room for, as far as buildings go, it is the first Christian church in the world. It is the room where the Supper was eaten and the room to which the disciples returned after the horror of the crucifixion. It is the room whose doors were shut for fear and in which Jesus manifested his presence after his resurrection, and the room which, later still, was swept as with a wind at Pentecost. Of this room Doctor Sanday says: "Of all the most sacred sites it is the one which has the strongest evidence in its favor. Indeed, the evidence for it appears to me so strong that for my part I think I should be prepared to give it an unqualified adhesion." Let us try to picture what it was like. I imagine it to have been one of the large rooms often erected on the flat roof of an Eastern house; a room longer than it is wide, with arched

doorways down each side which can be barricaded by heavy doors, but which, when the room was being used, would be fastened back. I imagine curtains hanging in each of the arches, not reaching to the top of the arch or down to the floor, so that the cool evening breeze could keep the room well ventilated. Then I imagine a long low table running down the center, not more than two feet above the ground, and couches at an angle with it on which the guests could recline. I imagine a lamp suspended from the ceiling hanging over the table, with perhaps other lamps fastened to the walls. We can imagine the preparation for the meal, the best vessels, the most comfortable couches. I can imagine Saint Mark's father, with his own hands, preparing one couch, at least; smoothing the cushions with loving fingers. Then, later in the day, as Saint Mark says,² when it was evening, we can imagine the disciples slipping in unobtrusively one by one, afraid lest their entry should have been watched, and then Jesus coming in quietly and taking his place at the center of the long table. Saint Luke³ reports Jesus saying a significant thing: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." It is a difficult phrase to translate, and is an attempt to represent in Greek an Aramaic idiom which expresses an action in an intensive form: "I have longed, above everything else, to have this meal with you before the Tragedy." Above everything he has schemed to spend this last evening with them, possibly to make one last effort to lay bare his mind and purpose to them, to get them to understand him, certainly to have their

² Mark 14. 17.

³ Luke 22. 15.

presence and comradeship and love, but above all to give to them those symbols of the broken body and the shed blood which, ever since, more than any other spiritual means, have brought life to the souls of men.

Saint John puts at this point the washing of the disciples' feet, prefacing it with that most significant sentence which shows how true majesty and utter humility meet! "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, . . . took a towel, and girded himself . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet."⁴ But we shall unduly lengthen the chapter if we dwell on this significant incident. Jesus apparently then said grace and the Supper began. As the mind dwells on this incident one can almost sense the atmosphere of the room. The minds of all present are hushed and subdued. A haunting fear of impending disaster grips the minds of the disciples. A weight as of ice-cold lead weighs heavily on their hearts. By the strange telepathy of sorrow every one of them is conscious that the atmosphere is pregnant with tragedy. At last the blow falls. "One of you will betray me," and some who are sitting nearest to Jesus learn who it is. The others did not know, or one feels that they would have risen up and prevented Judas going out. But they thought it was because he had the bag, and that Jesus had instructed him to carry out some errand.⁵ Those who did know were apparently restrained by the restraint of Jesus. Was Jesus' hand on Peter's knee? In the silence you can hear Judas' sandals shuffling across the floor. The curtain is lifted. You can see the dark-

⁴ John 13. 3.

⁵ John 13. 29.

ness of the night sky outside. The lamps flicker with the cool night wind coming through the doorway. Is it the night wind or is it caused by the fluttering wings of the Angel of Death? Perhaps there is a glimpse of Saint Mark himself who may have been detailed by his father to be within call, either that he might warn them of any attempt to seize them, or to be ready, as the representative of the host, in case anything were needed. Probably Saint Mark, quite a young man, having had his supper, covered himself with a white sheet and prepared to sleep on the roof of the house. Probably, as we shall see in the next chapter, he was the young man with the linen sheet who, having followed Jesus into the garden and heard his agonized prayer, had a narrow escape from being seized by the authorities. He lost his sheet and, tradition says, some of his fingers. He was known throughout the early church as the stump-fingered.⁶ "Judas . . . went out straightway: and it was night," says Saint John.⁷ What a night!

Then, after supper, Jesus took a loaf, blessed it, and broke it, and gave to them and said, "Take, eat: this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them, and they all drank of it, and he said unto them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many."⁸ Saint Luke and Saint Paul say, that Jesus added the words, "This do in remembrance of me."⁹ It was probably following this that Jesus talked to them along the lines of the most famous verses in the New Testament of which we have

⁶ Compare J. A. Robertson, *The Hidden Romance of the New Testament*, p. 33. James Clarke.

⁷ John 13. 30.

⁸ Matthew 26. 26-28.

⁹ Luke 22. 19; 1 Corinthians 11. 23.

John's impression in his fourteenth and fifteenth chapters. Then they sang a portion of the 118th Psalm and went out into the garden. There we must leave the narrative for the moment.

What did Jesus really mean by the giving of the bread and the wine? I have come to think that he meant something so profound that its full significance has not been fully understood by any branch of his church. But also I do feel that he meant something so simple that no one should hold back from receiving what can come to him through holy communion on the grounds that he does not understand. Let me write first on the simple meaning. After all, the men who reclined round that table were simple men. I believe that to come to the table with the very simplest thoughts of the significance of the rite, content to ask no questions, brings benefits to the spirit greater in measure than the measure of the mind's understanding. It is difficult to accept the view that the bread and wine, passed over the table by Jesus, *became* in any sense his body and blood, since in the flesh he was sitting there before them. To be entirely honest we cannot be quite sure whether Jesus was really looking beyond the circle of his own men when he gave them the bread and the wine. It was so foreign to his methods on other occasions to institute ritual and to ask that it should be perpetuated. I note that some scholars, including even Westcott and Hort, believe that the words, "This do in remembrance of me," are an interpolation in Saint Luke's account, and that none of the other gospel writers mention this sentence. Dr. Hastings Rashdall said, "There is nothing to suggest that our Lord had the intention of founding an institution or permanent

rite of any kind. Whatever actually happened at the Last Supper the idea of perpetually commemorating that Supper or investigating, with a new significance, the Jewish offering of cup and bread at the table, was the work of the church, not of its Founder."¹⁰ Doctor Barnes says, "There is but a frail foundation in our Lord's words and actions at the Last Supper for the elaborate sacrament and teaching of developed Catholicism."¹¹ Doctor Glover hints at the same point of view in his book, *The Pilgrim*, and elsewhere says, "There is a growing consensus among independent scholars that Jesus instituted no sacraments."¹²

My own view, in brief, is this. That whether or not it was the purpose of Jesus to institute a ceremony which he desired all his followers to carry out, he is not displeased by our reproduction of that last sacred meal. Those who partake of it are not bound to any particular view of the sacrament and its meaning and importance. If they like to accept the words of Jesus as recorded by Luke and Paul, "This do in remembrance of me," and if they come to carry out an act of remembrance in accordance with what they believe to be the command of Jesus, then their coming in that spirit is, I am sure, not displeasing to him. If they think of the bread and the wine, as given in the simplest sense, as means by which he may be remembered, then they are entitled to take that view and to come in that spirit. At the same time, for myself, I believe that as the meal proceeded the bread and the

¹⁰ *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, p. 59. Hodder & Stoughton.

¹¹ *Should Such a Faith Offend?*, p. 214. Hodder & Stoughton.

¹² *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, p. 158. But for a powerful statement of the opposite view see Gore, *Belief in Christ*, p. 99. John Murray.

wine became to Jesus himself symbols of that uttermost self-giving which he contemplated so soon, and I think that those who come with the simplest of thoughts about the theology of the sacrament will find mysterious things happening to them. First of all, they will find a sense of Presence, and second, they will link the partaking of the bread and wine with Calvary, and their devotion to Christ will be quickened. I could not possibly hold that the bread became his body, or that the wine became his blood; and, indeed, if Jesus had wanted to say, "This bread represents my body," and "This wine symbolizes my blood," the words in which such statements would have been reported are the same words which are translated, "This *is* my body." "This *is* my blood."¹³ And if some people have allowed superstition and magic to interpret this rite in a certain way, we must not swing to the other extreme and suppose that there is no subsequent value in it.

I suggest that we should partake of it and let it come to mean to us whatever God can make it mean to people constituted as we are. To some, as I say, it is merely an act of remembrance. To others it is a sacramentum, an oath of allegiance. To another it symbolizes his death. Another argues that as bread and wine nourish our physical body, so it is the very being of Christ himself, received into the soul, that nourishes it and makes it live and grow, and that the elements symbolize this fact. They think of him as the Bread of Life. Most of us find that material things can be channels by which a reality is reached greater than the means which produce it, or our under-

¹³ Compare Moffatt's translation of 1 Corinthians, 11. 24ff., "This means my body broken for you," etc.

standing of the process, even as lovely music induces a state of soul, an end far greater than the means which produce it. Surely, we must come to the service and allow it to mean for us whatever our faith can make it mean.

I can remember one hard-headed Scot in the army saying, "But, after all, it is only bread and wine;" and yet, as I think I was able to show him, there is not one of us who can escape, even if he wants to, the romantic values of symbolism. I remember a famous picture of a loaf and a cup. At least, at first sight the picture seems a picture of bread and wine only. But the artist has painted in the background very faintly the face of Christ. When once you have seen the face of Christ, the picture is never again merely a picture of a loaf and a cup. In the same way a wedding ring is not only a band of gold. A lock of golden hair which a mother keeps in a drawer and only looks at once or twice a year—isn't only golden hair. A photograph is not merely a piece of cardboard covered with sensitive paper on which an impression has been made. Some of us would claim that when in a certain mood of the spirit we look at the photograph of one who has passed beyond these voices, there comes to us a tremendous sense of the presence of that one. And we do not feel it is wholly different save in degree, when we take bread and wine and feel the presence of Someone else who is not far from any one of us. Ian Maclaren tells of a great and good man who was honored for his services to the city. They raised a statue of him and erected it in the open street. His virtues were written underneath so that all the city should remember. When the statue was unveiled the eyes of

many people were wet with tears, but the eyes of the members of his own family were dry. For that official looking figure in the unfamiliar flowing robes cut in marble was not that of the father they loved. At home they had dearer, far more intimate symbols, which brought him back vividly to their minds and hearts. A Bible, a portrait, a pack of letters: these meant very much more. Is it not so in some sense in regard to Jesus? The world will never forget him. His statue, as it were, is raised from earth to heaven. His influence is so interwoven in modern civilization that to tear it out would be to reduce that texture to a tattered rag. But I feel sure it is not displeasing to him to admit all who believe in his way of life and try to follow it, into that intimate band of his disciples which has grown from twelve to more than twelve million and to give to them all those intimate symbols which, in certain moods of the spirit, can not only strengthen devotion but bring him intimately near.

I remember reading of a little waif of the streets who was brought into one of our Children's Homes. On being received, he was offered a new outfit, and took a boy's pride in getting a new suit, new socks, new books. But when they offered him a new cap he seemed to want to cling to the old ragged one he held in his hand. However, they would not allow him to keep the cap and he was obliged to take it off. As he handed it over to the kindly Sister, who was superintending the changes of his garments, it was noticed that he tore the lining of his cap out and stuffed it into his pocket. The big tears welled up into his eyes. "Why did you do that?" said the Sister. "Because," he said, "the lining of my old cap was part of my

mother's dress. It is all I've got left of her, and it brings her back." The moment became sacramental and the lining of a torn cap was not a circle of faded material. It was a holy symbol. And by the right use of that symbol, in certain moods of the soul, a spirit-presence seemed not far away.

So this bread and this wine are sacramental. They are not only bread and wine; they are forever holy symbols. By the right use of these symbols, in certain moods of the soul, a Spirit Presence is brought near.

Nevertheless, I am sure that is not all. If it were, the bread and wine would be in the same category as other symbols which mediate his presence. As I have elsewhere sought to show,¹⁴ the Christian man may train his spirit to be so sensitive that a thousand things become the media through which a sense of his presence comes to the soul. As the poet sings, "I see his face in every flower." Jesus did not give men a flower. Yet we must not suppose that any other symbol would have done just as well. He gave them *broken* bread. He gave them *poured-out* wine. According to Saint John, he had previously spoken of himself as the Bread of Life;¹⁵ of himself as the Life of the Vine. And when they took the bread he said, "This is my body." When they took the wine, he said, "This is my blood." The next day his body was broken. The next day his blood was poured forth. How could they miss the deeper symbolism? Saint Paul didn't miss it. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death, till he come."¹⁶ It *must* have

¹⁴ *Jesus and Ourselves*, p. 243ff. The Abingdon Press.

¹⁵ See John 6. 3.

¹⁶ I Corinthians 11. 26. The earliest account of the Last Supper in the Gospels.

been to them the symbol of the body broken and the blood shed.

And what is this deeper symbolism? At least it meant that utter offering of Christ to the Father which they were not only to commemorate but to share: "'As I treat this bread so I treat my body; and you must do the same.' . . . It would help the disciples to realize that the death of Christ was a sacrifice, even the only true sacrifice."¹⁷

If, therefore, I perceive this deeper significance, then when I take the bread and wine, I not only realize a Presence, but by the symbolic act of eating the bread and drinking the wine I take into my very nature the nature of Christ, which is the food of the soul.¹⁸ And I take it as God's gift, realizing that I can only be what he wants me to be as he indwells me. But I go further than this: I offer myself to God. I unite myself with his sacrifice even to the breaking of my body and the shedding of my blood if God asks it of me. I give myself utterly as Jesus did. I do not merely commemorate his Passion. I *show forth* the Lord's death, filling up what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ for his body's sake which is the church.¹⁹ "Consequently, in this service, which is pre-eminently the Christian's means of access to the Eternal, and wherein he worships not as an individual but as a member of the church of all times and places, the relevant conception of Christ is not that of the historic Figure but that of Universal Man. The sacrifice of Christ is potentially but most really the sacrifice of humanity.

¹⁷ Compare Archbishop Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p. 238. The Macmillan Company.

¹⁸ See also *The Transforming Friendship*, p. 95.

¹⁹ Colossians I. 24.

Our task is, by his spirit to take our place in that sacrifice. In the strict sense there is only one sacrifice—the obedience of the Son to the Father, and of humanity to the Father in the Son. This was manifest in actual achievement on Calvary; it is represented in the breaking of the bread; it is reproduced in our self-dedication and resultant service; it is consummated in the final coming of the Kingdom.”²⁰

Therefore one is led with growing wonder to contemplate that meal in a room in Jerusalem in 29 A. D. Is there any other way in which so much could have been so simply implied? We find symbolized his presence in a way by which the soul may apprehend Him who is ever present. His giving himself to us; his offering himself to God, his challenge and appeal that we too, offering ourselves for the true life of the world, should give ourselves to him, that he as our High Priest may offer us, made one with himself, to God; his gift to us of his strength and power, enabling us to do and be what otherwise would be beyond us,²¹ and an act or vow of allegiance to him and the Father, and of service to the world.

For some of us, then, the service of holy communion becomes the central act of Christian worship. When Jesus broke the bread, he symbolized the breaking of his body in complete self-offering to God. When the priest or minister breaks the bread, he too symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body. It is a repetition of

²⁰ Archbishop Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p. 238. The Macmillan Company.

²¹ Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of this thy Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood that our sinful bodies may be made clean through his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood, that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us.

the supreme sacrifice of Calvary. But it is also a present breaking of the body of Christ. And what is the body of Christ now? What is his own chosen means of self-manifestation? The church—"The church which is his body." So to the measure of my faith and understanding, when I kneel at his table I, as part of his church, his body, am offering myself to God in complete surrender. "Here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee." "Christ is Priest and Victim in the one Eternal Sacrifice. . . . Christ in us presents us with himself to the Father; we in him yield ourselves to be so presented."²²

But for some this is assuredly a difficult conception. If so, let them ponder it and refuse to be hustled into it. For some sitting round that table at the first Supper the full significance may not have been realized even to the end. Indeed, will any of us ever do more than see glimpses of the awesome mountain heights of love to which this service points? But faith can soar where understanding falters. Further, faith can bring us benefits without waiting for the intellect's slow tread. And he who, adoring his Lord in simple faith, takes this bread and drinks this cup will find added to him "all other benefits of his Passion."

²² Archbishop Temple, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

XIII
AGONY

Some folk as can afford,
So I've heard say,
Set up a sort of cross
Right in the garden way
To mind 'em of the Lord.

But I, when I do see
Thik apple tree
An' stoopin' limb
All spread wi' moss,
I think of him
And how he talks wi' me.

I think of God
And how he trod
That garden long ago;
He walked, I reckon, to and fro
And then sat down
Upon the grou'
Or some low limb
What suited him
Such as you see
On many a tree,
And on thik very one
Where I at set o' sun
Do sit and talk wi' he.

He never pushed the garden door
He left no footmark on the floor;
I never heard 'un stir nor tread
And yet his hand do bless my head,
And when 'tis time for work to start
I takes him with me in my heart.

And when I die, pray God, I see
At very last thik apple tree
An' stoopin' limb,
And think of him
And all he been to me.

—*Anna Bunston.*

PRAYER

O God, take all our sorrows and use them to show us the nature of thy joy; take all our sins and, forgiving them, use them to show us the ways of true pleasantness and the paths of true peace; take all our broken purposes and disappointed hopes and use them to make thy perfect rainbow arch; take all our clouds of sadness and calamity and from them make thy sunset glories; take our night and make it bright with stars; take our ill-health and pain until they accomplish in thy purpose as much as health could achieve; take us as we are with impulses, strivings, longings, so often frustrated and thwarted, and even with what is broken and imperfect make thy dreams come true, through Him who made of human life a sacrament, of thorns a crown, of a cross a throne, even through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 26. 36-46; or Mark 14. 32-42; or Luke 22. 39-46.

CHAPTER XIII

AGONY

Is there any chapter in the life of Jesus which contains a poignancy of grief greater than Gethsemane? At the cross but for one agonizing cry, which is at any rate capable of another interpretation, there was serene composure and there was the presence of those who loved and cared. In the garden his own men slept and then fled. Yet the anguish of his mind was such that he never needed them as he needed them then.

We watch, then, the sad and silent procession from the Upper Room walking through the narrow streets of old Jerusalem, down to the brook Kedron, across the brook, up the slopes of the mountain and into the garden among the gnarled trunks of the olives.

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to him
The little gray leaves were kind to him
The thorn tree had a mind to him
When into the woods he came."¹

We know that the moon would be full, for it was the time of the Passover. I always imagine, however, that clouds scurried across the sky and occasionally a sharp shower fell. I imagine too the homeless wind moaning

¹ Sidney Lanier, "A Ballad of Trees and the Master."

and sobbing among the trees. It is perhaps allowable to suppose nature in some way attuned to the mind of him through whom all things were made.² At any rate, a storm may have been brewing, since it broke during the crucifixion.³

We watch Jesus bidding the disciples rest. He takes with him the chosen three. He began to feel "appalled and agitated." He was desperately weary. "My heart is sad," he said, "sad even to death; stay here and watch with me."⁴ Then he passes on, sinks down with his hands outstretched on the altar of a slab of gray rock half as old as time. He asks them to watch surely, that he may not be taken unawares. He is taking the situation into his hands. The situation is thrust upon him by wicked and mistaken men. But he is the Master of it, and still it carries his meaning and is bent to his purpose. It is no accident that he is taken. The disciples escaped. He could have done the same. Long years afterward Saint John reports Jesus as having spoken words like these: "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."⁵

In a few seconds the disciples, worn out with fatigue, are asleep. The open-air life, the meal they have just eaten, the emotional strain, all make them sleepy.

² Compare Milton, ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity":

"But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began."

³ Matthew 27. 45 and 51ff.; Mark 15. 33; Luke 23. 44.

⁴ Matthew 26. 37, 38; compare Mark 14. 33, 34. Moffatt's translation.

⁵ John 10. 17, 18.

Nothing is more tender in the Gospels than Jesus' later words to them. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" And then, finding them asleep again, he makes excuse as a tender mother might for the failure of her own children, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." . . . "Sleep on now, and take your rest." What infinite pity there is in the sad words! But one man is watching. Mark with his sheet about him has followed into the garden. His was the hand that wrote the story we treasure so much. His the only eyes that saw that agony. His the only ears that heard that prayer. Mark is yards away in the deep shadow of the olives. He will not intrude on the Master he has come to love. Moreover, he who knew every tiny path in his father's olive orchard is watching the gate. As he waits in deepest sorrow and intensest watchfulness he hears a sound which at first he takes to be the sobbing of the wind among the trees. Then, to his anguish, he hears a voice. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Mark creeps nearer. Ought he to offer comfort and friendship? He pauses. The voice breaks out again in accents which will haunt Mark's dreams for many a day, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me; howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt." Mark knows that he must not intrude. A burst of moonlight passes over that stricken, agonized face. What is that form above him? Is it a trick of the moonlight or is it an angel presence? In the sudden light Mark sees great ruby drops start from his brow and fall upon the ground. Mark hides his face. He cannot bear the sight. That face, once bright as the

morning sun on Galilee, he has seen to be the face that was marred more than any man's.

Mark is thinking hard. Is this, then, the will of God whose name is Love? Has it all been arranged from the beginning to be gone through like a set program? You, my reader, must make up your own mind about that. I don't think so. But this choice of the cross is the will of God *in these circumstances*. When the dilemma before his mind is the cross or cowardice, when he is face to face with the situation which sin has thrust upon him, he chooses sacrifice, he bears sin. Only in that sense is the cross the will of God. In every other sense it is the will of those who plotted his death, and who shall call that the will of God? It would be calling murder the will of God. A father during the war told his boy of twenty that he hoped he would join the army. To many of us then it seemed that to do otherwise and go on eating bread was cowardice. The father did not mean that it was his will that his boy should kill others. It meant that in those circumstances where the alternative seemed to be khaki or cowardice it was the father's will that the boy should enlist.

So the hour of agony will come to us all. It is not the father's will in the sense that it is his intention from the beginning. Human agony can nearly always be traced to human sin, human ignorance, or human folly, not necessarily in the one who suffers, but somewhere in the great human family whose assets we share and whose liabilities we must bear. God is always trying to replace sin with holiness, ignorance with knowledge, folly with wisdom. Therefore the calamities that come from them are not his intention.

But when they are thrust upon us because we are part of his family, then, in those circumstances, it is his will that very quietly and bravely we should meet the situation as our share of the world's burden, as our share of the sorrow of the world, and, bearing it for him, change its nature and its effect upon us so that it becomes a sacrament, and all its agony changed and transmuted into spiritual power.

Alas, Mark, his face in his hands, has taken his eyes off the gate of the garden. But Jesus does not need to be warned. He has seen the glint of torchlight on armor and steel helmets. He has seen the grotesque shadows thrown on the moonlit ground. The disciples are awake as one is awakened by a sense of nameless fear. They stumble to their feet. At that moment Judas says, "This is where he generally prays." Jesus steps out into a circle of moonlight. A sudden rainstorm from the west makes the torches hiss. The disciples are by his side. You can see the white, wet faces of the eleven. Their hair, dank, is falling in wet wisps over their brows. Their wide eyes are those of men startled out of sleep. The eyes of Jesus are the only things of calm in that moment of tumult. Judas steps forward and kisses him repeatedly.⁶ Then the scuffle. Peter, terrified, impulsive, slashes blindly. The Temple guards draw their swords. Mark feels his cloth being tugged, turns to recover it, feels a tinkling pain as two of his fingers are shorn off, clutches his sheet and flees. The others stampede also. Some of the guard try to seize them. "Let them go," says Jesus. "I am the man you want."⁷ Why do you come

⁶ Matthew 26. 49.

⁷ John 18. 5, 8-9.

like this with swords and staves?" Then in a voice as calm as peaceful death he said to Judas, "Friend, do what you came to do."⁸ Then Jesus is bound and led away.

It is hard to understand Judas. Some of us believe that the friendship of Jesus is the greatest transforming power in the world. If we can get people into living touch with him, we believe that he will do the rest and change their lives. Countless times we have seen this happen. Our faith would receive a rude shock if it were possible for a man to live with Jesus in the flesh, for two years; to see his face and hear his voice and then go out and sell him for a few pieces of silver. I leave my mind open to contemplate the possibility of such base action. But I think the psychology of Judas has another explanation.

Surely, his hope was that he should force Jesus' hand and make him defend himself. The actions of Judas are those of one in whom impatience has gone mad. One can almost hear him mutter to himself: "This is no sort of a way of going on. This is not the way to establish the Messiah's kingdom. If I had a tenth of the power that possesses him, I would waste no time talking to this man at midnight and that woman by a well at noon. I would make my plans to sweep Rome into the sea. I would begin to *move*. I would fulfill the age-long prophecies of Israel." Even when Judas bargained with the priests and made his plot and said, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, take him," I have often wondered whether he was not saying under his breath, "And then you will see whether he is a king or not." Judas never dreamed that Jesus would allow

⁸ Matthew 26. 50.

himself to be put to death. Indeed, if we had seen Jesus raise others from the dead, should we ever have dreamed that he would let himself be murdered? He could see that there was no way of smoothing out the differences between Jesus and the priests. It was bound to be a clash. Judas never thought it possible that Jesus could lose, and, of course, the idea of the cross as a symbol of triumph was out of his ken altogether. So he leads the mob to that quiet garden. He reveals the sanctuary of the Master. As his face comes near to Christ's in that awful kiss he implores Jesus to act, to smite his enemies, to call forth his legions of angels if need be, but to act, to *act*.

The wild gleam of Judas' eyes nearly bursting from their sockets finds no answering gleam in the eyes of Jesus. Only that awful calm. Only the steady gaze of eyes that now are as quiet as those brown tarns that sleep on the bosom of the everlasting hills and reflect nothing but the peace of the sky above. Only the voice that says, "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"—and then, "Friend, do what you came to do!"

Professor Findlay tells us that there is great significance about that sentence. Some cups, similar to those used at the Last Supper, and of the same period, have been unearthed and on their base was discovered an inscription showing these very words, "Do what you have come to do," which may have been a motto of the time as common as our motto, "Do it now." Professor Findlay makes the attractive suggestion that Jesus was making one last appeal to Judas by quoting the motto on the cup from which they had both drunk, as a means of reminding Judas of their fellowship together.

Whether that is so or not, we shall probably never know, but no one was more horrified than Judas to see the result of his act. Almost mad, he stumbles through the night which had become a nightmare such as the insane know. He rushes back to the priests in the Temple, flings them the money they had paid him, and in a horror that we can never fathom says, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood."

What do the priests say to the man who had let the Master down? Ought they not to have taken him with loving hands and in that hour of penitence and remorse spoken to him of the forgiveness of God and of the chance that still remains to every man to make good? Instead of that they say coldly and callously: "What business is that of ours? That is your own affair." And that sentence was the strength of the rope that hung him. As Canon How has said: "It is almost too horrible to contemplate! Priests of God offering sacrifice daily, first for their own sins and then for the sins of the people, yet professing to have no concern for the sin of this despairing traitor but driving him out to deeper misery and more blank despair and suicide."

So Jesus passes out of the garden of agony master of the situation and master of himself.

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo him last,
From under the trees they drew him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew him—last
When out of the woods he came."⁹

⁹ Sidney Lanier, "A Ballad of Trees and the Master."

The point I want us to realize is that Jesus took hold of this terrible situation and made it carry his message, not that of his enemies. It was not an accident that it happened when it did and where it did. He had arranged it all. He saw himself as the Paschal Lamb. He arranged to eat the Last Supper with his disciples on the Thursday night, and the secrecy of his arrangement with the man bearing a pitcher shows how carefully he planned it. That was not the actual Passover (which was eaten on a Friday.) Jesus calls it "this passover," that is "this special passover." But he himself planned to die on the actual day of the Passover, the Friday, and as it turned out when the lambs were being killed in the Temple for the Passover feast he was being nailed to his cross. The sublime dignity of it kindles the imagination. His enemies contrived his death, but they did not reach the goal of their purpose. He was the master of the situation unto the end.

Let us stay a minute to point out that concerning the agony of the Master pity is entirely irrelevant. It is not uncommon at Lent to bow before the cross, seeking to share in the suffering of Christ and to be filled with the emotion of pity. I have seen pictures of Jesus in the garden, or wearing a crown of thorns, or nailed to his cross, and underneath have been printed the words: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!" It is important to remember that these words occur in the pre-Christian book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, written about 540 B. C. So far from being the words of Jesus, they do not even interpret the spirit of Jesus. Can you imagine Jesus ask-

ing people to pity him? No! His word is, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me." And it is a truer interpretation of his spirit to say of him, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Too often we make appeals to pity on behalf of the Master whom we thus misinterpret. We speak of him as having nowhere to lay his head, or we recall that there was no room for him in the inn, or we represent him as knocking at the door of the heart; but let us remember that to make an appeal to him as though he were a beggar or an object of pity is of him as having nowhere to lay his head, or we recall that there was no room for him in the inn, or we represent him as knocking at the door of the heart; but let us remember that to make an appeal to him as though he were a beggar or an object of pity is grievously to misrepresent him. The one who knocks at the door is a King; *the* King. He is the Master of life, and if he has come to be the Master of our life, that is the highest privilege our life can ever know.

Rather than pity we should learn the message of Jesus, Master of every situation and in a sentence the message is this: That though things will come to us, thrust upon us, as his agony and cross were thrust upon him, not by the intention of God but by evil and folly and ignorance, yet it may be God's will *in these circumstances* that we should not escape or evade the situation, but grasp it firmly and go through it nobly, bravely, manfully, and thus change its very power to harm us, making it an instrument of God's purpose in the world and a means of deepening our own spirit-

ual character. Disease, disaster, disappointment, death, may come to our life, not because God intends it, but because of the blindness of evil, the foolishness and ignorance of men, just as the cross came to Jesus, not because God intended it, but because evil men plotted it. But nothing can happen to us that, bravely grasped in his name, we cannot change into a thing of glory, leaving God to vindicate us in his great third day.

So Bishop Selwyn changed the pigsty into which the Maoris cast him into a place where he could worship God until they said in amazement, "It is impossible to degrade a man like this." So John Nelson changed the dungeon under a slaughterhouse into which he was caste into a paradise. He wrote, "It stank worse than a hog's-sty by reason of the blood and filth that flowed into it from above." Then he adds these words: "My soul was so filled with the love of God that it was a paradise to me." So Bunyan changed Bedford Jail into a Palace Beautiful. So Michael Fairless changes a sick-room of pain into a window through which the world might see the fair face of nature and the glory of God. It was this amazing alchemy that puzzled Pliny. "I will banish thee," he said to the Christian he was trying. "Thou can'st not," was the reply. "The whole world is my Father's house." "I will slay thee." "Thou can'st not," was the reply, "for my life is hid with Christ in God." "I will take away thy treasures." "Thou can'st not," he answered, "for my treasure is in heaven." "I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friend left." "Thou can'st not," said the Christian, "for I have a Friend from whom thou can'st not separate me."

To us also may come some shattering calamity, some hour of agony, some thwarting disappointment, some overwhelming grief. These things come from human folly, human ignorance, human sin, in the great family whose assets we enjoy and therefore whose liabilities we must bear. But while they are not God's intention they are God's challenge. It is for us to say what message they shall bring and what effect on personality they shall have. Nothing is *allowed* to come near us that has any real power to break our spirit. Indeed, the measure of the agony, because it is the measure of God's faith in us and purpose for us, must be the measure of our trust in him. And Jesus can show us how to turn agony into peace, thorns into crowns, and a cross into a Throne.

XIV

DEATH

He is the lonely greatness of the world—
 (His eyes are dim),
His power it is holds up the cross
 That holds up him.

He takes the sorrow of the threefold hour—
 (His eyelids close),
Round him and round, the wind—his Spirit—where
 It listeth blows.

And so the wounded greatness of the World
 In silence lies—
And death is shattered by the light from out
 Those darkened eyes.

—*Madeleine Caron Rock.*

THE HILL CALLED NORBURY

I seldom pass
This wind-torn tree;
Or walk this hill;
Or tread this grass,
But I do see
Another Tree
Another Hill
Another Grass.

—*Egbert Sandford.*

PRAYER

Almighty God, who hast shown us in the life and teaching of thy Son the true way of blessedness, thou hast also shown us in his suffering and death that the path of love may lead to the cross, and the reward of faithfulness may be a crown of thorns. Give us grace to learn these hard lessons. May we take up our cross and follow Christ in the strength of patience and the constancy of faith; and may we have such fellowship with him in his sorrow that we may know the secret of his strength and peace, and see even in our darkest hour of trial and anguish the shining of the eternal light. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 27. 32-56; Mark 15. 21-41; Luke 23. 26-49.

CHAPTER XIV

DEATH

No one can approach this subject in any spirit but that of the deepest reverence and humility. Nor can anyone hope that in a single chapter the incidents preceding the crucifixion, the dread deed itself, and its significance for us, can be adequately dealt with. I pass over, then, the supposed defection of Saint Peter, the trials, the scourging, the crown of thorns, the mockery with the reed, the spitting, the bearing of the cross, the awful deed of nailing Him to it, lifting it with its quivering burden and dropping it into the hole made for it. I have to pass over also the deeply significant words from the cross, and the shameful events of the worst three hours in human history. I set myself in this chapter to ask what was the significance of his death *for us*.

Sometimes one feels that one just wants to kneel down before the cross and bow one's head in adoration, knowing that if one can understand no more, one is at least in the presence of the greatest love that was ever manifested on earth. And yet no real despite is done to reverence, if, with a great sense that one is touching sacred things, one asks the question, "What does the death of Jesus, nineteen hundred years ago, really mean to me?" How much of its significance can I grasp? After all, we are commanded in what Jesus called the first and greatest commandment to love the

Lord our God with all our mind. Some of us feel that God loves a questing mind, and that though there will be much mystery remaining after all our search for an adequate way of expressing the meaning of the cross, yet it is not essential of a true faith to refrain from asking questions.

Moreover, if certain views called "theories of the atonement" have expressed man's thoughts about the cross in ages gone by, theories which now do not commend themselves to the modern mind, it is no part of a true virile Christian faith to try to believe them because one's father believed them, or to regard venerability as an evidence of truth. A theory may be both old and sound. All ancient theories strive to reflect some facet of truth. But a proof of antiquity in a theory is not a proof of its truth.

Lest one should seem to disparage the work of those who are responsible for what we call theories of atonement, it is well to remember that those who framed doctrinal statements did so, not because they were convinced that their theory was the last word on any doctrinal question, but through sheer necessity owing to the gross errors put forward by opponents and because an inadequate theory was at any rate better than silence; it was an *attempt* to understand.

At the same time we shall not expect the most recent theory to contain the greatest degree of truth. We shall, rather, expect to find the greatest light on the cross in the words of those who had most deeply drunk of Jesus' spirit and who most profoundly understood his mind. Antiquity does not imply truth. Novelty implies it still less.

We shall be helped to make the right approach if we

imagine a follower of Jesus sitting down to think things out on the evening of the crucifixion. This glorious young Teacher, half guessed already to be divine, who had given to the world a new vision of God as a Father, of all men as brethren, who had claimed to be the Messiah of Israel, expected for centuries, who had promised to set up that great kingdom which he had called the kingdom of God, had been put to death—executed like a criminal. Why had God allowed this to happen? Had there been, after all, a dreadful mistake and was Jesus not the Messiah? Memories of Jewish sacrifices might come to his mind. Like a flash he would ask himself whether Jesus was not another Lamb offered up, and he would realize with something of satisfaction that the only way in which he could make sense of the death of Christ was to imagine him as being in the same category with those sacrifices on the altar which would be familiar to every Jew from his boyhood. In other words, here is the Jew trying to understand the cross; trying still to think of Jesus as the Messiah, and yet a Messiah undefeated and unbeaten, even though crucified; trying to make sense of God's refusal to intervene. The obvious thing to do was to apply to Jesus the metaphor of the Jewish sacrifice. Here was the Lamb slain to take away the sins of his people. Had not John the Baptist used that very word "Lamb"?¹ The Epistle to the Hebrews has a magnificent plea for the pressing of this metaphor. "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall

¹ It is only in the fourth Gospel that the word "Lamb" is used. I, therefore, do not press the opinion that it was actually used.

the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God?"² And this became probably the view of the rank and file of the early church. Indeed, it is probably the view of many to-day. A modern hymn book contains the lines of Doctor Watts:

"Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace
Or wash away our stain.

"But Christ, the Heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood, than they."

In fact, it is difficult to see how any other view could be held in the minds of members of the early church, together with the view of Christ's Messiahship. The alternative was a belief that Jesus had failed, or was deceived about himself, or was wrong in his teaching about God.

We may ourselves come to a conclusion not far from this. But we of to-day, to whom Jewish sacrifices mean little or nothing, will come to his view along a different path. We probably find it difficult to retain, in their etymological sense, words like sacrifice, propitiation, and satisfaction. In the sense in which we use them to-day the words may not be the best words to express what the cross connotes, but, as we shall see later, they were used because they contained some element of thought about the cross which is still essential to a right understanding of it. At the same time the modern man will probably find that the alternative

² Hebrews 9. 13, 14. The writer drops the metaphor in 10. 8.

to retaining them is to be dumb. No new words have been invented which express any further truth. Let us try first, then, to liberate our minds from some Jewish ideas in which our thoughts about the cross are still enmeshed. Take, for instance, the word "sacrifice." There is a true sense in which the death of Jesus was a sacrifice. In a true sense his was the only perfect sacrifice ever offered. He sacrificed himself for love's sake in order to affirm those values which belong to the very nature of God. We cannot avoid using the word. Further, the use of the word "sacrifice," even with the connotation which the Jew gave it, did retain one important element, namely, the cost of forgiveness. And while some Jews believed that by the slaughter of a bullock or a goat or a lamb guilt could be removed from the sinner, others clearly identified themselves with the purity of the victim and only thought of the blood-shedding and burning as symbolic acts of that offering to God to which his holiness had a right and claim; an offering which he *ought* to have from them. Indeed, the Jews who had thought most keenly and seen furthest themselves realized the futility of sacrifice save in the moral sense. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord."³ "Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it." The psalmist goes on to use the word at a higher level.⁴ "Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in."⁵

³ Isaiah 1. 11; see 1. 10-17; compare also Amos 4. 4; Hosea 6. 6; Jeremiah 6. 20.

⁴ Psalm 51. 16; see 51. 16-17; Psalm 50. 8-14.

⁵ Psalm 40. 6ff. We note two usages of the word "sacrifice" in the Bible: one which we retain to-day and one which we discard. The first is moral, the second ceremonial. When we think of Jesus offering himself as the Suffering Servant, we can say he offered himself

The word "substitution" is difficult to many. We cannot let it go. It safeguards that essential thought, to which we shall turn later, that on that dreadful Friday in 29 A. D. something was done for us. If it had not been done, consequences of unimaginable seriousness—so I believe—would have resulted. "By his suffering our Lord did make it possible for us to avoid suffering continual alienation from God, the consequences of this: and therefore in a sense, his suffering is substituted for ours."⁶ But behind it for many people in our pews is the picture either of the Jewish sacrifice in which the lamb is substituted for the sinner or else the legal figure in which God is thought of as a Judge and humanity as a prisoner in the dock. In retaining it we must remember, in the first place, that all legal relationships between God and man are foreign to the mind of Jesus. God is our Father, we are his children. We are not adequately thought of as prisoners in a dock, nor is God completely thought of as a Judge. Further: though one must keep the precious truth in the phrase, "He bore our sins," one must also remember that sin is not only a load that we carry on our backs which another can carry for us. Sin is not completely thought of as a debt which somebody else can pay. The whole difficulty about sin *on our side* is that our sins have become ourselves. Sin has passed into the very fiber of our being and made us what we are. And the problem of our salvation is not

in sacrifice in a sense forever true. But if we think of his offering himself as a sacrifice in the sense in which a lamb was offered, then that is a conception which, I think, we must let go. The author of Psalm 51 in two consecutive verses uses the word in both senses. "Thou delightest not in sacrifice" (ceremonial). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit" (moral).

⁶ Archbishop Temple *Christian Faith and Life*, p. 80. Student Christian Movement Press.

only the problem of paying a debt or bearing a load, but of changing our whole inner life. I want to keep the word "substitution," but I also want to clear away from it entangling misconceptions.

Another word from the bondage of which we should try to escape in clearing the ground for positive thought on the cross is the word used in our communion service—"satisfaction"; with which may be linked another word from the same service—"propitiation." If one asks "Satisfaction of what?" the answer is, "The eternal law of righteousness," and in that answer is a truth to be preserved. The use of the word has made men realize that forgiveness is no glib and easy thing on God's side. The forgiveness of sins on God's side and the amazing transformation its acceptance makes on man's nature, is, perhaps, the greatest miracle one could imagine. But forgiveness, the restoration of a broken relationship, has a cost to God which we do not realize. Forgiveness is not the mere passing of a word, as though God said, "There, there, I know you didn't mean to, but don't do it again." Sin is a deep, dark, and terrible thing. It stands between man and his relation to God. God is holy and pure beyond our means of knowing. The act of sinful man's restoration to a perfect relationship with a Divine Being, without injury to man's moral nature on the one hand, lessening there the sense of the sinfulness of sin, and without injury to the nature of God on the other hand, lessening there the sense of his awful holiness and unstained purity, is a task worthy of a loving and righteous God, for which adjectives like prodigious and amazing fall away insufficient. I do not mean here that the one act of the death of Jesus was the

satisfaction of a God who demanded a murder before he could forgive his own children. I do mean that the death of Jesus, one with his life, revealed on the plane of history a glimpse into eternal mysteries which gives us some idea of the measure of what it costs to mend the broken relationship between sinful man and the Holy God.

The word "propitiation" is not dissimilar. We need to preserve it in the sense in which the New Testament writers used it. Dr. C. H. Dodd has a valuable note on the connotation of this word in his Epistle to the Romans,⁷ where he says it means in the Bible "a means by which guilt is annulled," or, where God is the agent, "a means by which sin is forgiven." Unfortunately, the popular use of the word would seem to suggest a kind of buying off the wrath of God by the shedding of blood. Such usage is not intended in the New Testament and must be discarded.

Let us now try to look at Jesus' death, putting aside all our preconceived theories. Jesus was a historical Person and his death had certain historical causes. I say this to help us put away from our mind the thought that the death of Jesus was a kind of predestined drama. I have not the slightest doubt that the whole drama of the life and death of Jesus was in the mind of God from the beginning. The death of Jesus was as much within the mind of God as the creation. The two are constantly thought of together as parts of the divine plan. This knowledge, of course, did not relieve those who plotted Christ's death of moral guilt.

⁷ Pages 54-55. Hodder & Stoughton. Compare also Archbishop Temple, *op. cit.*, p. 78: "The word translated 'propitiation' also means 'mercy seat,' the meeting place of God's holy love and man's sin."

It did not destroy free will. God's knowledge was a knowledge of how men would use their free will. But that knowledge did not govern their action. A homely illustration may be allowed. If I open my study door to a starving dog and hold out a bone to him, I "know" he will move toward the bone. But it is not my "knowledge" which makes him come to me. It is his hunger. It was not God's knowledge which made men crucify Jesus. It was their sinful nature. Christ's death was the resultant of certain definite forces of iniquity, though he himself went willingly and purposefully to it at the last. Let us try in two or three sentences to look at the historical situation. Jesus comes to men with this glorious vision of the nature of God. He preaches that God is Father and all men are brethren, that God cares nothing for outward ceremonial or meticulous attention to outward form, and cares only for the penitent, loving, and responsive heart. Jesus has come, he says, "To preach good tidings to the poor: . . . proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."⁸ In a word, he has a new way of life, making it radiant, free, and glorious, full of meaning, beauty, and power. It is a great mission of repentance and hope. Of course he carries the multitude with him. The common people hear him gladly. Gradually the scribes and Pharisees realize that if he is right, they are wrong, and that if he is proved right, they are proved wrong; all that they stand for will be as nothing, and they begin to mix their dislike and suspicion, fear and prejudice into a corporate hatred big enough to encompass his death.

⁸ Luke 4. 18ff.

Doctor Gore has so ably summarized this situation that I cannot do better than quote his words.⁹ Jesus "had challenged the Pharisees to change their fundamental ideas and methods in matters of religion; and when have high ecclesiastics been ready to accept this challenge from a 'mere layman'?¹⁰ He became in the eyes of the priestly family a source of danger to their position and their wealth, for he claimed, or allowed other people to claim for him, the title of 'the King of the Jews,' and he had attacked a valuable source of income—the Temple market—perhaps twice over. Again, he offended all the patriotic prejudices of the nation. No zealot, no ordinary Jew on the lookout for the Messiah to come, could have a word to say for him when they really understood what he meant by the kingdom of God. As for Pilate, Roman justice was of a sort which did not care much for the rights of an individual provincial if the imperial interests demanded that he should be got rid of. If, then, it was essential in the view of the Jewish leaders to silence that troublesome voice, and there was no considerable body to stand up for him, and Pilate was not prepared to make himself unpopular by resisting their demand, the result which followed was inevitable."

From another angle look for a moment at the attitude of the disciples, who thought he was the Messiah. He was to sweep Cæsar from the throne, break the hated tyranny of Rome, and set up a new kingdom of which they were to be the new leaders and rulers. They never stopped to ask themselves what some of

⁹ *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 169. Home University Library.

¹⁰ See pp. 124ff. But there is no suggestion that Jesus ever officiated as a priest in the Temple.

his words could mean. They were so filled with their apocalyptic view of what the Kingdom meant that they could not understand the deeper elements in Jesus' apocalyptic view or his talk of a kingdom in the hearts of men brought about by love.¹¹ So, as in the case with all of us, what they couldn't understand they left out. They hardened his metaphors to mean literal facts, and his teaching about conquest through love was left out as unimportant. Then, when it was too late, they found that the metaphor was a metaphor and that the kingdom of love was a reality for which he was ready to die.¹²

The former of these two facts brought Jesus to the cross, and the latter, together with sheer physical terror, alienated the disciples. We have tried to show in earlier chapters that Jesus set his plans for acceptance, but that there came a point when he knew that he would be rejected, when he set his face rigidly to go to Jerusalem and face what the forces against him could do, still believing that God would vindicate him. Breathless at his courage and daring, we watch him take the situation into his own hands, choose his own time and place, and remain master of the situation until the end.

These are the historical facts. What is the significance of them for us to-day? My answer is that the significance is twofold. It is, of course, a hundred-and-twofold, but the little bit that I can see divides naturally into two. We are given a unique revelation

¹¹ There was a real apocalyptic element in Christ's teaching, as Dougall and Emmett showed in *The Lord of Thought*, Student Christian Movement Press, and as Schweitzer perhaps overestimated.

¹² I owe the thought of this paragraph to Doctor Maltby.

of the nature of God's love and of eternal values, and we are shown a divine deed of cosmic significance.

1. Look first at the revelation of divine love which we have in the cross. The fact is that the divine method of conquering the world is that of loving men to the uttermost with a love which goes on loving whatever pride or fear or hate can do. It is never exchanged for violence, or indifference, or resentment. Jesus loves both his friends and his enemies, and even on the cross still goes on loving them. He does not love the lovable only, as we tend to do. When men did vile things, cowardly things, disappointing things; when they poured suffering and agony and loneliness upon him as if they were trying to see how far they could go before his love broke down, they never reached a point where it did break down. When his love was thrown back in his face, with spitting and mocking and cursing and betrayal, that great royal love remained unbroken. Jesus' reaction to sin, then, is to be pierced by it, *but to go on loving*, and because this is Jesus' reaction to sin this also is God's reaction to sin. The cross manifests a love that never lets us go.

An illustration will help us here. Doctor Maltby has, in his booklet, *The Meaning of the Cross*, a story which he heard from the father of a reprobate son, a degenerate of a particularly unpleasant type. The father had done all he could think of year after year—twice emigrated him and twice received him home again, set him up in business and then paid for his failure, tried one scheme after another—always to be rewarded with some fresh infamy or some new uncleanness, "Until at last," said he, in a burst of grief, "I had to make an end of it. He was ruining the home and he

was killing me. I made him a small allowance and *washed my hands of him*. What else could I do?" We have not an expression for the opposite of "washing our hands of a person" unless it be the "bearing of sin," but Jesus did the opposite of washing his hands of men, and in this sense he does bear their sins. "To bear sins means to go where the sinner is and refuse either to leave him or to compromise with him, to love a shameful being and therefore to be pierced by his shame, to devote oneself to his recovery and follow him with ceaseless ministries, knowing that he cannot be recovered without his consent, and that his consent may be indefinitely withheld."

We may ask whether this method saves us. My answer is that love is the only thing that does save, and this is part of its revealing. I see the first meaning of the cross most clearly myself when I think of it as the reaction of perfect love to human sin. This love Jesus revealed in his death. In those dreadful hours of his Passion he revealed the whole nature of God eternally. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." I recognize, therefore, that I am in the hands of a love which will never let me off but which will never let me go. I can go on sinning if I blind myself to that love, but once the vision which Jesus revealed in his Passion dawns upon me, then I am bound to hate my sins and surrender to that compelling love. I watch Jesus loving men even when they hound him to a terrible death, accepting the whole burden which their sin created and still loving until love breaks down all barriers and wins their allegiance. And the meaning of the cross to me is that God is like that, and that when once I realize that God loves me with a love

that, in face of all my sin, never gives me up, and in face of all my faithlessness never loses faith in me, well, then, I am made penitent because I cannot go on resisting in the face of a love like that. I may sin if I turn my back on that love, but inasmuch as I realize that love and open my heart to it I am saved. I am not at the end of my journey but I am at the end of my rebellion. The result of the first significance of the cross is that, when I apprehend it, I at least *want* to love God in return for a love for me such as the cross reveals.

In those poignant three hours a curtain is drawn back which reveals the nature of the eternal. The cross is the translation into terms of history of an eternal fact. Let me illustrate what I mean.¹³ I remember one night in the Mediterranean we passed quite close to Stromboli, the famous island volcano which rises sheer out of the sea. It was after dinner and almost dark. Suddenly there was a great burst of flame from the crater at the summit. Huge tongues of flame shot up hundreds of feet into the sky, lighting up the ocean for miles around. Tons of molten rock were thrown up into the air. Through our glasses it was possible to distinguish red-hot boulders racing down the mountainside, and gradually a stream of lava forced its way almost to the sea. For many hours when our vessel had slipped westward toward the last lingering light of sunset which lay upon the horizon, when the bold outline of Stromboli was lost in the gathering shadows of night, that red-hot stream of lava, like some awful, open wound, gashed the darkness.

¹³ I have quoted this illustration from my earlier book *The Transforming Friendship*, p. 156. The Abingdon Press.

What did it mean? It meant that for a few hours there had been revealed those great fires which had been burning in the mountain's heart since the foundation of the world.

"I sometimes think about the cross,
And shut my eyes, and try to see
The cruel nails and crown of thorns,
And Jesus, crucified for me.

"But even could I see him die,
I could but see a little part
Of that great love, which like a fire,
Is *always* burning in his heart."

God is always like that. The cross did not change God's attitude toward men; it revealed his eternal attitude toward men. The love of Christ on earth which went on loving even to the cross is a little picture in language we can dimly comprehend of the eternal love of the Father, the only saving power in the world.

This revelation goes further still. Every loving, selfless deed has a cosmic significance, and a universal range. A splendid deed can never be merely limited to the particular circumstances in which it happens. The facts of history emphasize the fact that no splendid deed is so limited. The martyrdom, for instance, of Joan of Arc is doing more for the world in this age, thanks to Mr. Shaw, than in the age in which it happened. Why is this? Partly, we are members one of another, and all acts are, in a sense, representative; partly because every magnificent deed of heroism helps us to see a little further into the nature of God. It fills up the gaps of our wonderment as to what God is like, and since every good man responds in the ac-

tions of his personal life to what the known nature of God demands, therefore a good deed at any point of history influences peoples' lives throughout all history. In the death of Jesus I see true values. I see the nature of sin and am horrified. I see the nature of God and am moved, moved as nothing else moves me to repentance and to answering love.

If, therefore, we agree that Jesus revealed God during the historical conditions of his life and death, we shall see in the cross not an incident limited in its scope to the times of Jesus; we shall see in it a revelation of the way in which love always acts; an insight into the divine sense of values. We shall see, as it were, through the happenings of the cross into the nature of the eternal heart of God. And if we are agreed that the significance of any splendid incident is widened according to the character of the person who plays the chief part in it, then in Christ's death we see a happening in which a Man plays a part so perfect that the word "human" is not big enough to connote all he is, and concerning whom we are driven to use the word "divine." Therefore the scope of the significance of his death is widened to include all ages of all humanity. So for all time, and for all ages, and on all shores, his death will speak to men because in it men will see the nature of God, the values of God, and the reaction of God forever and to all men.

When all this is said, I think, however, that we may go further before we pass to the second meaning of the cross. I think it is still true to say that the cross does not only show us Jesus revealing the nature and love of God, but is itself in a real sense Jesus' act of dedication of himself to the human race. If a mother

loves an evil son and does everything she can to bring him back to God without success, and then finds death at the door before she can accomplish her loving purpose, she surely does not think of death as the end of her work. She will not be able to contemplate any period at which her heart is not going out in love and tenderness to the son; and if she were admitted to the highest heaven, even there she would have only one concern, and that would be how she might use whatever new powers became hers in the new life to win her son back again to God. When Jesus said, "It is finished," part of his work was over, because he had revealed the love of the Father, and had allowed the nature of the eternal to break through into historical conditions, but we must not misunderstand his cry, "It is finished," to mean that then he would go to heaven and wash his hands of humanity. Jesus is such a lover of humanity that it is not only true to say that he loved men in the days of his flesh even unto death; he loves all their brothers after them who did wrong, and heaven itself for Jesus does not mean escape from a concern for humanity, for he will go on loving them and suffering for them until the last is gathered in. Whatever may have been his link with the world before his earthly life, yet after it his own love will make it impossible for him ever to break away from humanity. In Doctor Maltby's beautiful words "On the cross he bethrothed himself forever to the human race, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health. . . . We see the meaning of the cross when we see it as the act and deed of Christ done with all his heart and mind and soul and strength; when for love's sake he burdened him-

self with the whole situation which our sin had created, embraced the prospect of endless sacrifice, and dedicated himself without reserve, in face of all that sin could make of us, to the task of our recovery to God and all goodness." The crucifixion is the pledge that he is devoted to the task of winning me back to God, and instead of saying, "He died for me," I ought to say, "He dies for me."

So in Jesus' death, all the meanings of which we can never hope to comprehend, I see at least a revelation of the nature of love and therefore the nature of God. I see revealed once for all the attitude of God to sin. But I see more. I see One who dedicates himself to the task of my recovery, who is himself the Good Shepherd seeking the lost sheep *until he find it*. He is the Hound of Heaven from whose loving constancy there is no escape. The cross is not only an incident which happened nineteen hundred years ago; it reveals a love that follows me still, of the quality of which the cross is forever the witness and proof. His love is no weak, effeminate thing. There is steel in it as well as tears. It is compassionate but inexorable, tender but relentless, gentle but uncompromising. It is a love that will never let us go. But it is also a love which will never let us off. To yield to its discipline and its purifying as well as to its comfort and compassion is to be saved, and to be saved is so to see what God is that we are brought into a relationship with him by which we cry "Abba"—"My Father, my Father," and are prepared to welcome any necessary discipline—regarding it no longer as punishment—if by it we can be made all that God wants us to be. And in the end that love will win. For there is no power on

earth nor in hell which can stand out against love which, maintaining its pure quality, keeps on loving indefinitely.

2. Let me pass on to the second significance of his death, for there is far more than we have yet stated. We have seen its significance in its far-reaching revelation of the nature and extent of the divine love. We have seen that it reveals the nature of the divine sense of values which God puts on things, and in both these senses the significance of his death has a value for us irrespective of time and place. We have seen what his death *revealed*. But is that all? Was there not, on the cross, some mighty deed done in the unseen? If so, what was that deed? And what was its significance? Those three questions I want to deal with, but I have no desire to keep the reader waiting for the answers. I believe that some mighty deed was done in the realm of the supernatural. What that deed was I do not know. I do not think it is within the power of present human understanding to state it completely in words. I believe its significance is profound. I believe that in some way *beyond all human ways of knowing* sin has been dealt with, my sins and yours, so that we, who are sinners can come into a relationship with God least inadequately described as disobedient sons returning to a holy and loving Father.

1. Was some mighty deed done on the cross? To say "No" leaves the cross in the same category of thought as any other martyrdom. It is, of course, different from all others because of the character of the martyr. For that reason it reveals the nature of God as no other death could do. What evidence is there that it is more than this?

(1) I would put first the amazing effect of the preaching of the cross on all peoples in all lands through all centuries, even where perception of what it means intellectually cannot have been present. To collect even a little of the evidence startles one into the conclusion that there is a supernatural difference between this death and every other death in history.

In a far-off Indian jungle village a missionary is telling the story of Christ. His story is illustrated by lantern slides thrown on to the whitewashed end of a mud hut. Suddenly the picture of Jesus on the cross is thrown on to the wall. An outcaste Indian, afterward discovered to be one who had never heard of Jesus, moved toward the picture crying, "Come down, thou Son of God. *That is my place!*" This is only a shred of the manifold evidence that everywhere people with no theological background interpret the cross as being more than the death of a very good or even a perfect man. The story of Livingstone moves us, but not in the same way. There is not a deed in all the history of all the nations since time began which has had the effect on the hearts of men which this death has had.

(2) The second piece of evidence which points to some supernatural deed is the condition of Jesus' mind in regard to his death. Remembering how brave men have gone to death with songs on their lips; remembering the glorious story of martyrdom through all ages, if we do not assert some supernatural deed demanding more than we can guess from Jesus, we should have to suppose him less courageous than some of his women followers who were subsequently torn to pieces by lions for his sake and who went even to that death

without fear or tears. Socrates calmly drinks the hemlock, but Jesus, sore amazed and very heavy,¹⁴ shrinks from the cross months before the end.¹⁵ Was Jesus not accomplishing more than Socrates?¹⁶

(3) His own language suggests some supernatural deed. What is the cup which his Father gave him to drink?¹⁷ What is the baptism with which he must be baptized?¹⁸ What is the decease which he must *accomplish*? What is the ransom price which he must pay?¹⁹ How difficult it would be to explain all Jesus' own words about his death in terms of martyrdom! There is evidence that Jesus thought much about the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 as his own death drew near. I wish here to quote some words from Professor Chapman.²⁰

"It was inevitable that our Lord and the early church should turn and turn again to words which throw such shafts of light on the Passion. That Jesus did so there is considerable evidence in Mark 10. 45, and in the institution of the Supper. The word 'many' comes in Mark 10. 45, and in Isaiah 53. 11. The idea of a service rendered, a deliverance wrought, is prom-

¹⁴ Matthew 26. 37; Mark 14. 33. Literally, "very homesick." David Smith, *Disciple's Commentary*, Vol. I, p. 419.

¹⁵ Luke 9. 51; Mark 10. 32.

¹⁶ Mr. Warburton Lewis, in his excellent book, *Jesus of Galilee*, p. 200 (Nicholson and Watson), shows that a large element in Jesus' shrinking from the cross was due to the fact that he saw the cross as the inevitable way he had to tread, and yet realized the awful sin which others would commit before the dread deed was accomplished. I agree, but I think there was more than this.

¹⁷ Mark 10. 38; 14. 36; John 18. 11.

¹⁸ Luke 12. 50.

¹⁹ "Paul's term (*apolytrosis*) is not concrete, as the English word 'ransom' suggests, but abstract (= the act of redeeming). Further, it can be used without any explicit reference to the payment of money as a simple equivalent of 'emancipation.' This is the basis of Paul's usage" (C. H. Dodd, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 53).

²⁰ Lecture Course on the Atonement, delivered at the Y. M. C. A., Leeds, in the spring of 1932.

inent in both passages. There is also the parallel between 'poured out his soul unto death,' and 'gave himself.' On the last night Jesus quoted the words, 'And he was reckoned with the transgressors' (Luke 22. 37; Isaiah 53. 12), and added the comment, 'That which concerned me hath fulfillment.' There is good reason for thinking that our Lord was deeply influenced by the idea of the Suffering Servant, and it is no accident that in the middle of his Gospel the first evangelist quotes the passage from the forty-second chapter of Isaiah (Matthew 12. 17-21). To insert it at this point shows deep insight." Did the death of Jesus in his own view have the value of a great doing?

(4) The New Testament writers certainly believed that a mighty deed was done which forever made a difference in the relationship which the sinner bore to God. "It needs no proof," says Professor James Orr, "that all the New Testament writers who refer to the subject regard the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of men as connected in quite a peculiar way with the death of Christ; and it is not less evident that they do this because they ascribe to Christ's death the sacrificial and expiatory value. They do this, further, as everyone must feel, not in a mere poetic or figurative way, but with the most intense conviction that they have really been redeemed and reconciled to God by the death of Christ upon the cross. The *how* of *this redemptive transaction* most of them may not enter into. . . ." ²¹ We may feel now that some of their language we should want to alter or use in a different sense but two things may be said. They cannot have been entirely mistaken. Their voice is too unanimous for that. If

²¹ *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 333.

they were mistaken on this essential point, they whom Christ had chosen to mediate his message to the world and to whom he gave the Spirit of illumination, then our faith in them as revealers of the mind of Christ is seriously shaken on countless other matters beside this. It demands more of credulity to believe that unanimously they misunderstood, than to believe that they put the emphasis in the right place. And, secondly, their metaphors meant *something*, and something more than a love revealed. Paul uses the word "reconciliation,"²² that Jesus was made sin *on our behalf*,²³ and became a curse for us.²⁴ The death is an act of redemption,²⁵ a propitiation. It is a representative death.²⁶ God sent his Son into the world that the world through him might be saved.²⁷

(5) The early church followed the tradition. Their greatest thinkers never deny the doing of a mighty deed though they describe it in different language. The Ransom theory, the Satisfaction theory of Anselm, the Substitution theory, the Government theory of Grotius all point to a great doing as well as a great revealing.

Unless, then, I suppose that Saint Paul and Saint John and the early church were in the dark and on a completely mistaken track, I am forced by the evidence to believe that some mighty deed in the realm of the supernatural, something done "once and for all"²⁸ was achieved by the death of Jesus.

2. Then what was this deed? I do not know. I am

²² 2 Corinthians 5. 18.

²³ 2 Corinthians 5. 21.

²⁴ Galatians 3. 12.

²⁵ Romans 3. 24; Galatians 3. 13.

²⁶ 2 Corinthians 5. 15.

²⁷ John 3. 17.

²⁸ Hebrews 10. 10.

emboldened to add that man cannot know completely. The church has always confessed its ignorance as to the nature of the deed,²⁹ as Professor J. A. Findlay says, in a very beautiful passage: "As we draw near the cross he is left more and more alone, for he is pressing on to regions never visited before by the feet of living man. . . . *He goes on past all our power to follow him even in thought*, and by and by comes back with blessing upon his lips and unshadowed peace upon his face."³⁰ Perhaps Jesus did not completely understand all that he himself was accomplishing until it was accomplished. This in itself would account for the poignancy of his shrinking.

Of course I know what men have said that that mighty deed was. The words "substitution," "satisfaction," "propitiation," all tried to express what he did. He redeemed the world; he bore the sins of the world; he saved the world; as the Head and type of humanity he offered a perfect humanity with perfect obedience to God. In a pregnant sentence Dr. McLeod Campbell says, "There went up from the depths of Christ's sinless humanity a perfect 'Amen' to the righteous judgment of God against sin."³¹ But as we do not know what the words mean when we say that God became man, so we do not know what the words mean when, even with all the wealth of the language of the New Testament, we try to say what Christ did on the cross.

²⁹ It is interesting to note the view that disincarnate forces of evil were dealt a shattering blow by the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 2. 8; Romans 8, and especially Colossians 2. 14-15). He forgave us all our trespasses, he canceled the regulations that stood against us. All these obligations he set aside when he nailed them to the cross, when *he cut away the angelic rulers and powers* from us, exposing them to all the world and triumphing over them in the cross (Moffatt).

³⁰ *Jesus as They Saw Him*, Pt. 2, p. 210.

³¹ *The Nature of the Atonement*, p. 117.

The deed is beyond us. It runs out into the realm of eternal and awful mystery. And I have come to believe that it is better to say so than to suppose that any one theory can express the facts.

This, of course, is not to suppose that no ray of light can be shed on what that deed was. If my child sins, I suffer. I suffer in proportion to my love and in proportion to his sin. If he sees me suffer, he will be drawn to penitence. Then I can forgive him. But my forgiveness is no glib thing. It will cost me an identification with him as he is in all his shame and a new linking of myself to him to bring him into a closer relation with myself till he becomes what I want him to be. Because I love him I cannot let him suffer the results of sin alone. I enter them and share them. So Christ entered the experience of evils which are the expression of God's hostility to sin.

I can at least see this light in the cross, that God in Christ identified himself forever with human life in all its sin and moral revolt, suffering in his divine nature all that such identification involves, being dragged down to the pit men make themselves by sin and refusing ever to escape from that which man makes God suffer until man should be wholly in line with divine purpose.³² And the value of Christ's suffering was not merely the patience and love and resignation revealed but *the complete acceptance of their ordaining* as an expression of the righteousness of God.

It is an awesome thought that Jesus now cannot escape. He can never be again as he was before the incarnation. He has given up his unshared Godhood forever. He forever suffers. That face, once bright

³² Romans 8. 29; Ephesians 1. 10; compare Romans 5. 19.

with the divine glories of the eternal morning before creation when the morning stars sang together, is now forever "pale and agonized for me." God is always man. God is always man suffering, because forever he identifies himself with the dread consequences of the revolt of man against God. He who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf. And by faith we can become one with him *and with what he offered*. Through Christ, as it were, we offer to God that perfect offering which man owes to God and cannot offer because of his sin.

What is the significance of this deed? Here, again, the most correct answer may well be that no one knows. It was a deed transcendent in its nature and cosmic in its range. Its main significance is surely that in some way beyond all human ways of knowing it made a difference to the effect of our sins on our relationship with God. It does not mean that penalty is remitted. However we may wish it, this is not the real meaning of forgiveness. Forgiveness may or may not mean remission of penalty. What forgiveness means essentially is that a broken relationship is restored. And if this be love, I can bear the penalty, for it is not penal but purging; not retribution but a loving discipline. I can even welcome it if it is making me what God wants me to be.

The significance of the cross is surely that my sins, if I have faith in what has been done for me, have been dealt with in such a way that they no longer stand in the way of my renewed relationship with God.

We may ask why this is necessary. If a man is penitent and God is willing to forgive, what more needs

to be done? But the asking of the questions mirrors the casual and slack sense of the sinfulness of sin which characterizes our age. When man sins, the effect in the eternal is more terrible than we ever guess. The task of forgiveness is one which only God can effect. Even to him its cost is great beyond our ken. That ever a man should be truly forgiven one sin is a miracle as marvelous as the incarnation. And if it were done without cost, then the whole nature of a righteous God would be impugned and the whole moral order threatened. Sin has consequence in the eternal other than penalty in the sinner. "If the God who forgives suffers under the impact of sin in a fashion which requires Gethsemane and Calvary for its manifestation, it is impossible to say he forgives sin through indifference. . . . The cross, by showing what sin costs, safeguards his righteousness while he forgives."³³ If we have no human illustration of this, it is because we *are* human and do not understand what sin is, or its consequences, effect, and implication. But God could not ignore this consequence without denying himself. So, in Christ, he does what man cannot do and does not imagine needs doing. He identifies himself with man, and, whatever the awful entail of sin involves in the eternal, he himself bears it, and on the plane of history does it on the hill called Calvary, even as in the Unseen he does it eternally.

To leave the matter there will disappoint many, but, as Dr. Vincent Taylor once said,³⁴ "It is far better to

³³ Archbishop Temple, *Christus Veritas*, p. 260. The Macmillan Company.

³⁴ In two articles which greatly helped the present writer and which appeared in *The Methodist Recorder* May 29, and June 5, 1930. Doctor Taylor has been kind enough to read this chapter in manuscript and make helpful suggestions.

perish in the attempt to reach the center than to be content with the circumference. . . . Any worthy doctrine of the cross must show that Christ did something for us of infinite worth, something we can never do for ourselves, and something which has to do with sin. . . . More than this, it must present Christ's act in such a way that by faith it becomes ours, so that the atonement is not only a work of Christ outside us and on our behalf, but also a power of Christ in us, redeeming us from sin and restoring us to God and to goodness."

For myself, though I shall go on wondering forever, such study of the atonement as I have been able to make leaves me—I trust a little more humble—singing the hymn I sang as a child, a hymn which says all that I can as yet say, about the cross, and which is the most profound commentary on the atonement I have ever seen:

"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

"We *may not know*, we cannot tell
What pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

"He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by his precious blood.

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gates
Of heaven and let us in.

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"O dearly, dearly has he loved,
And we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do."

XV

RESURRECTION

Beauty they thought was dead, was dead that day,
They sealed the Master in his new-wrought tomb,
And wondered that along the dusty way,
White lilies of delight were all in bloom.

Dear Christ, so long ago, so long ago,
And men have dreamed again that Gladness dies,
Chanted her requiem and laid her low—
And turned to meet the smiling of her eyes!

—*Source Unknown.*

PRAYER

O Christ our Master, we have read of a day when men and women gathered in an upper room, downcast, depressed, and in despair. But their eyes were gladdened by thy glorious face, and their ears with thy voice, saying, "Peace be unto you." We have gathered here to worship and adore. Come to us too! We do not ask to see a Face or hear a Voice, for our Western faculties are not trained to these things. But may the certainty of thy presence be just as truly ours. May the hush of thy presence fall upon us. Make us *sure* of thee. Then we shall be as those who went out to find thee everywhere; to find ordinary tasks and dusty roads and peril and pain and death all shining with new meaning and beauty. For they saw through the temporal to the eternal, through the visible to the invisible, through that which seems to that which is. O thou Risen One, do this mighty thing for us and in us. For thy name's sake. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Matthew 27. 57—28. 10; Mark 15. 42—16. 11; Luke 23. 50—24. 12; John 19. 38—20. 18.

CHAPTER XV

RESURRECTION

THE questions that I wish to ask and shall endeavor to answer in this chapter are as follows: What really happened between sunset on the Saturday and dawn on Easter morning? And, further, as a corollary, is there any way of looking at the facts of the resurrection so that we can the better appreciate their significance?

We must begin by accepting the fact that Jesus was really dead. Desperate to push the facts of the New Testament into the narrow limits of that which can be easily received by the mind, attempts have been made to suggest that Jesus was not really dead, but had fainted, and that in the cool of the grave he recovered, made his way out, and subsequently pretended to his disciples that he was risen from the dead. We need not be concerned about this notion, though it was seriously proposed by men of the mental caliber of Renan and Venturini. We can dismiss a theory that asks more of credulity than any orthodoxy has ever asked of faith. We are being asked to believe that a person suffering from at least five terrible wounds, with the consequent loss of blood, and need of medical attention, lay on a stone shelf through the hours of a cold April night¹ bound in graveclothes, arose on Easter morning having awakened out of his coma, took off the

¹ Peter's warming of his hands is an authority for the coldness of the night.

tightly bound bandages of the tomb, pushed back a heavy stone that would take several strong men to move, evaded the guards, from some unexplained source procured other clothing, and then did not merely stagger out into the open air but somehow convinced skeptical men and women that he had conquered death and the grave. As our first step in understanding the resurrection of Jesus, I think we must accept the fact of which the blood and water, which flowed from his side, are themselves evidence,² that he was truly dead.

Other views have been taken which have the same purpose as the one just put forward. They can be summarized as follows:

1. That Joseph removed the body.
2. That the Romans removed it.
3. That the Jewish authorities removed it to prevent veneration of the tomb.
4. That in the early dawn the women mistook the tomb.

In his excellent book, *Who Moved the Stone?*³ Mr. Frank Morison subjects the resurrection story to the most searching critical analysis I have ever read, and he goes into each one of these suggestions with the most painstaking detail, showing, as I think convincingly, that each is impossible. I do not intend to cover that ground again because I think there is one answer which will satisfy us about all these suggestions. In a sentence it is that if any of these suggestions had actually been true, someone would have revealed it. There was a seven-week gap between the

² John 19. 34.

³ Published by Faber & Faber.

resurrection and the preaching of the resurrection. It is not as though the resurrection were preached at once, the apostles getting away with the story and hushing up any possible contradiction. Does anyone suppose that a mistaken inference of such tremendous import could be kept a secret for seven weeks, that eleven intelligent men never heard a whisper of it, or that, hearing it, they stifled it and proceeded to lay down their lives for something they knew to be a lie? One of the most remarkable things about the preaching of the early church is the emphasis on the death and resurrection of Christ. Is it credible that the whole history of the Christian Church is founded either on a delusion or a lie? Is it, then, so easy to dispose of a body? And is not the moral character of the disciples and the subsequent history of the church the answer to these four contentions? For I think it may be said that if the body of Jesus had been produced by his enemies, it would have been the end of the movement that became Christianity.

I am personally not so convinced that the *Romans* would have instituted an inquiry. Perhaps an Indian illustration is of value here. The position which Mr. Gandhi held during the Satyagraha Movement, relative to British Official India, is not incomparable with the relation between Jesus and the Roman authority. To the latter Jesus was the preacher of some new-fangled doctrines to the people. He came too near the wheel of law and order, was caught in it and torn. After his execution his followers claimed that he rose from the dead. Those who first made the claim were not, for the most part, the educated or the cultured, but Jewish peasants. Officialdom hearing such a

story, smiles, just as we laughed in India over the story related of Mr. Gandhi that, after telling some village women to spin, and being told that they had no spinning wheels, he directed them to bury two strands of cotton from their saris and in the morning they would dig up a spinning wheel; or the story that on occasion he spirited a copy of the Koran through locked doors. So officialdom may have shrugged its shoulders. Dead carpenters do not rise from the dead. What funny stories ignorant people will believe! It is not an improbable attitude. If Mr. Gandhi died and some of his followers claimed that he had risen from the dead, there would be no official inquiry. The story would be related at dinner tables as the latest Gandhi-ism. But I think there would have been a *Jewish* inquiry, and I think it would not have been difficult to carry out. Would it not merely have had to consist in producing the gardener?

May we then proceed in our inquiry by accepting the fact not only that Jesus was dead, but that the body was actually laid in Joseph's tomb by Joseph and his men, wrapped in its customary graveclothes, in the folds of which spices had been laid,⁴ and that they then sealed the tomb and went away. We remember that the Jews asked Pilate for a Roman guard, but Pilate refused and said: "You have a guard. Go your way, make it as sure as you can." So they went and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.⁵ It is most important to remember, therefore, that those who were guarding the tomb were Jews who probably belonged to the Temple police.

⁴ John 19. 39-40; Mark 15. 15-47; Luke 25. 55; Matthew 27. 61.

⁵ Matthew 27. 62-66.

The next thing we find is that the women come to the tomb in the early morning wondering who will move the stone for them, and they find that the stone has been removed. Saint Matthew, who admittedly has a great love for impressive magic, says, "Behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men."⁶ One feels greatly attracted to this lovable writer who saw so many things either in terms of the fulfillment of prophecy or else in terms of supernatural magic. There seems almost humor in his words, "and sat upon it," as though to show a fitting angelic contempt for big stones. But it is a good principle of criticism not to depend upon a supernatural explanation if a natural one will serve. At this point I must again express my indebtedness to Mr. Frank Morison's book, *Who Moved the Stone?* By careful consideration of a passage which he found in the apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews he deduces, as I think again convincingly, that one of the members of the Temple police, "a servant of the priest," was a friend of Jesus. He then surmises that on the resurrection morning Jesus' first appearance was to this friend who, with others of the police, was on guard outside the tomb. We know that the appearances of Jesus were not those of a ghost.⁷ The appearances were of a person in the flesh, or, at any rate, in a means of manifestation which appeared to have objective

⁶ Matthew 28. 2-4.

⁷ Luke 24. 37-40.

existence. What is more likely than that the member of the guard should at once report to his superior officer that he had seen Jesus outside the tomb? If he did that, would not this leader at once resolve to open the tomb to find out whether the report were true or not? He would be taken to task very seriously if it were so, and to find out was the most obvious duty. Therefore, it is suggested the Temple guard were responsible for rolling back the stone in order to examine the tomb. When they did that, they found the grave empty. Evidently, they rushed pell-mell into the city and reported to the chief priests.⁸ Had the watchers of the tomb been Romans, they would not have accepted the suggestion that the Jerusalem authorities made, namely, "Say ye his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept." One can hardly imagine a Roman soldier accepting the ready-made excuse for slackness that when supposed to be on duty he was fast asleep. "So they took the money," says Saint Matthew,⁹ "and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continueth until this day." And we may notice, in passing, that the further suggestion that this rumor arose, is itself strong evidence that the tomb was empty.

I am as yet making no comment on the method of the resurrection. I am merely quoting Mr. Morison's suggestion which accounts for the stone being rolled away. What are we to make of the angel? Mark says, "The women saw a young man in a white robe." Matthew says, "An angel of the Lord descended."

⁸ Matthew 28. 11.

⁹ Matthew 28. 15.

Luke speaks of "two men"; John of "two angels." Mark's Gospel is the earliest, and we are naturally attracted by the simple explanation that the occupant of the tomb was a young man, and what does that young man say? According to Mark he says: "Be not amazed: Ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, which hath been crucified: he is risen, he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him! But go, tell his disciples and Peter, he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." I quote again Mr. Morison's book;¹⁰ "When did Jesus tell his disciples he would meet them in Galilee? We turn back over the pages of the manuscript, past the account of the trial and the crucifixion, until we read in Saint Mark: 'Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended, . . . for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.' " It is suggested that Jesus used these words on the journey between the Upper Room and Gethsemane. If, as is generally held, Mark was the young man in the white sheet (see page 217), he evidently accompanied Jesus and the disciples on that fateful journey and overheard these words which he preserved in his Gospel.¹¹ Personally, I feel driven to the belief that the young man whose linen sheet was seized by the soldiers and who fled from them naked, and the young man of the tomb on Easter morning were both Saint Mark.

We need not be surprised at what we learn next,

¹⁰ Page 253.

¹¹ I am indebted here, also, to my friend the Rev. Harry Tunnicliff, B.A., for an illuminating article on this subject in *The Methodist Recorder*, May 1, 1930.

that "the women fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had come upon them." We remember, first of all, that they were trespassing. The garden was not a common burial ground. It was the private property of Joseph of Arimathæa. We remember also that it was dawn, or, as Saint Matthew says, "as it began to dawn," and John says, "while it was yet dark"—not only the most eerie time of the day, but a time when physical vitality is at its lowest. Furthermore, we are to imagine tender-hearted women, Jewish women of the first century, bound up in a mass of convention and restriction, as different from the modern girl as is possible, trespassing in the half light in the neighborhood of the tomb. There is the shock of seeing the moved stone, and on top of that the terrifying shock of hearing a voice, as I think, the voice of the exultant Mark, who had come out even earlier than the women to the sepulcher. They did not stay to listen to his message. This is a situation that requires the help of their men friends. They rush back to Jerusalem to fetch Peter and John.

We then have this exciting race of the two men to the tomb, and one may be forgiven again for seeing humor in John's eagerness to show that he won the race. On two occasions, at least, he makes it quite clear that although Peter was the first to burst into the tomb it was he, John, who got there first.¹² We then have the pregnant sentence, "He saw and believed." There was evidently something deeply impressive about the way in which the graveclothes lay. What had taken place? I believe that in some way, at present unknown to science, the physical body of

¹² John 20. 4 and 8.

Jesus was subjected to a process of speedy dematerialization or evanescence. It was after I had come to this conclusion by a rather different method of approach that I was privileged to read Henry Latham's *The Risen Master*.¹³ Latham imagines the body of Jesus lying in a stone recess excavated from the side of the cave or tomb which penetrated some seven or eight feet into the rock. His head is imagined as resting on a ledge of stone some six inches above the surface of the recess on which the body was lying. In front of the cave is a circular stone like a millstone, running in a groove about four inches deep. The stone can thus be pushed along the groove until it entirely covers and completely closes the low entrance to the tomb, though it was of such weight that no one man could possibly move it without help.

John reaches the doorway, finds the stone rolled away and "seeth the linen cloths lying."¹⁴ "They come under his eyes without his looking for them; he did not expect them to be there. The word used here is βλέπει. Peter gazes on the clothes with a view to making out the meaning of what he saw (θεωρεῖ). John . . . came in after Peter and beheld the sight and understood it (εἶδε). John understood that the Lord had risen *because the graveclothes were undisturbed*, and

¹³ In a former book, *After Death* (p. 153), I outlined, with the permission of the publishers, Latham's position, and I take the liberty of quoting here what I quoted there.

¹⁴ The word "lying" suggests that the manner in which they were lying impressed him or he would have said that he saw "the linen cloths." Moreover, the Greek word used (κειμενα) is as emphatic by reason of its position as it can be. He says βλέπει κειμενα τα ὀθῶνια (20. 5). "That a strong stress is laid on κειμενα is shown by its being first. If a Greek had wanted to express the idea of lying flat, or extended at length, this is the word he would have used." (Latham, *op. cit.*, p. 42). Peter also uses the word. (θεωρεῖ τα ὀθῶνια κειμενα 20. 6.)

on this evidence he believed.¹⁵ John seems to have been the historian, as well as the eyewitness of the deserted graveclothes,¹⁶ and his narrative suggests that when Jesus rose from the dead, he withdrew from his graveclothes without disturbing their arrangement. On his retiring from them, the linen cloths fell flat on the rock, because their support was withdrawn, and because they were borne down by the hundred-pounds weight of aloes and myrrh.¹⁷ But there was no such weight pressing upon the napkin. Its smaller size, or the nature of its material, or its three days' wrapping, or all these united, apparently enabled it to retain its erect form after the support which had molded it was withdrawn."

Latham goes on to show that in the East the face, neck, and upper surface of the shoulders of the corpse remain bare. There is considerable space then between the garment covering the body and that covering the head, a thought which, remembered in conjunction with the conception of a stony ledge or pillow on which the head rested seems to give point to the words, "the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself." The words "rolled up" (*ἐντετυλιγμενον*) suggests a turban or cloth rolled in turban fashion. An Indian turban which the writer brought home years ago kept its form for months, and would lie erect on its side.

The impression we get, then, is that the body speedily evanesced. The clothes were not unwrapped or the

¹⁵ John 20. 8. The Sinaitic manuscript found and translated in 1894 by Mrs. Lewis has "they saw and believed."

¹⁶ Though we cannot look for the same degree of historical accuracy or the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus in the fourth Gospel as we find in the Synoptics, yet this narrative bears every mark of being autoptic.

¹⁷ John 19. 39.

powdered myrrh and aloes would have made a conspicuous heap on the floor. That no spices are mentioned, favors the view that they remained between the wrappers of the graveclothes, where they were originally placed. If the body had risen or been raised into an erect posture, the spices would have fallen down.

The witness of the graveclothes, which may be thought of as a Sign,¹⁸ is certainly valuable. Had they not remained in the tomb, or had they been thrown together in a heap, the disciples would never have dreamed of a resurrection, but would have concluded that the grave had been robbed. They would have gone home.¹⁹ Peter would have inquired of Joseph or Nicodemus. He would have been searching Jerusalem for his Master's body. Anxious inquiry and restless search would then have filled the hours which we know to have been filled with quiet waiting, a quiet necessary after the shock of the crucifixion, and as a preparation for the manifestations subsequently made to them.

They never seem to have supposed that human hands had borne the body away, and although one feels that there is probably a good deal of truth in the suggestion that the experience of the transfiguration²⁰ when they "saw" and "heard" Moses and Elias, and became familiar with the idea of existence in a disembodied state, had prepared them for the resurrection and post-

¹⁸ Note in the Gospels the invitation to "see the place where the Lord lay," Matthew 28. 6; Mark 16. 6; John 20. 12. "The open doorway beckoned to all Jerusalem—Come and see."

¹⁹ Compare Luke 24. 12.

²⁰ They were told to "tell no man what things they had seen, save when the Son of man should have risen again from the dead" (Mark 9. 9).

resurrection experiences, yet it was the position of the graveclothes which made true the simple declaration, "they saw and believed." They seem to have realized that their Master had, by an evanescent metamorphosis, dimly comprehended as yet, assumed a purely spiritual existence. I am eager to say at this point that if all the above suggestions are accepted, we have in no sense an explanation of the resurrection of Jesus. I think we have a way of regarding it which does not cause quite so many difficulties, but if I were asked what happened to the body of Jesus, I can only say that I do not know. I believe there was an empty tomb, but I do not believe that the physical particles of Christ's body ever came out of the tomb, for to believe the latter is to postpone the problem and not to solve it. The question is, what happened ultimately to the body? It could not be received into heaven. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Physical matter does not pass, at least, as we understand the nature of matter at present, through doors, nor is it easy to account for appearances and disappearances. Further, I have never seen any answer to this question. If the body of Jesus, which rose from the dead, were the same body which was wrapped in the graveclothes, where did the clothes come from in which he appeared to Mary? The graveclothes were left in the tomb and were overwhelming evidence of the resurrection to those who saw them, yet the form which appeared to Mary was a clothed figure. To accept the idea of an evanescence, perhaps the speeding up of those processes which dispose of the physical matter of our own bodies, is to preserve two facts about the resurrection which to the modern mind are both

demanding and which on any other supposition cannot both be held together in the mind at the same time.

The first is the empty tomb; for if Jesus had survived death only as we survive it, leaving a body behind, his disciples would never have believed in his resurrection and the ascension. Further, Bishop Westcott's objection would hold good: "If our Lord had returned to life as Lazarus had done, the fact that he was alive upon the earth might have been established by a physiological test; but what can physiology tell us about any kind of life but our own? If this physiological test had shown that the post-resurrection life of Jesus was really like our own—carried on, that is to say, in a body provided with heart and lungs and other organs, performing their functions as ours do—then the resurrection would tell us nothing whatever about another life, or about a spiritual existence of an order different from our own. There would have been no pledge of a new human life; the chasm between the seen and the unseen world would have remained unbridged."²¹

The second is a "resurrection body" perceptible to the senses but spiritual in its essence. We have slender resources with which to understand the nature of this "body." We are beginning to learn a little about the power of mind over matter. When we consider what Jesus was in his mind and spirit, then none of his acts are to be regarded as necessarily on the same plane of action as our own, though this does not mean any denial of his perfect and complete humanity. With that perfectly pure spirit acting through matter and

²¹ Latham, *op. cit.*, quoted from Westcott, *Revelation of the Risen Lord*, Preface, p. xiii.

upon matter, dare we say what is likely and what is unlikely to happen? "What if," as Henry Drummond once said, "it should be as perfectly normal for a sinless man to rise from the dead as it is for a sinful man to remain in the grave? What if perfect nearness to the great Author and Sustainer of all should give a man power over all the tragic forces of nature and time?"²² And I would add, what if the Person we are discussing were himself God?

I feel, however, that help may come to us at this point from psychical science, which is slowly disentangling itself from the fraudulent and absurd, and impressing the unbiased mind that it has a case which must be listened to. The evidence now is too convincing and from too serious sources to be lightly dismissed by a wave of the hand as spiritualistic fantasy. I append here a story, which came to me from one whose word I trust completely, which I think throws some light on what may have been the nature of Jesus' appearances: A minister was sitting alone in his study one stormy night when he heard the bell ring. Going to the door, he found standing there a young woman whom he knew fairly well. She was from a village some five miles away. This village was in an adjoining circuit, from which the minister in question had moved some sixteen months before.

"Good evening," she cried; "I expect you have forgotten me, but I am come on a very urgent errand. My father is dying. He never attended church much, but once or twice when you were in the circuit we persuaded him to hear you preach. I *do* wish you

²² Professor David Cairns, *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*, p. 153.

would come out and pray with him before he passes away."

"I will come at once," replied the minister.

Putting on his coat and hat, and taking an umbrella from the stand, he set off in the pouring rain on a five-mile walk, accompanied by the young woman.

On his arrival at the house, the wife welcomed him warmly. "Oh, how good of you to come!" she said. "But how did you know that my husband was passing away?"

"Your daughter came for me," he replied, with some surprise at the question.

It was the woman's turn to be surprised now. "Come upstairs at once," she said, "and we will talk afterward."

The minister went to the bedside of the dying man, spoke to him, and prayed with him, and shortly afterward the end came. Turning to the woman who was now a widow, he asked where the daughter was, for he had not seen her again since they entered the house.

The woman replied: "I was surprised when you came to the door this evening, and I asked you who told you that my husband was dying. You said my daughter called, and that you came out together. You have not heard, then, that my daughter died a year ago?"

Now the minister was astounded indeed. "Dead!" he exclaimed. "She came to my door, rang the bell, and walked out here with me. But there," he said, "I think I can prove that. As we came along together the road was up in one place, and a watchman and another man were sitting in a hut in front of a fire.

They saw us go by. I'll speak to them on my way home."

He set off on his return journey, and on reaching the hut found the two men still sitting in front of the fire.

"You saw me go by an hour or so ago, didn't you?" he said to the men. "Was I alone?"

"Yes sir," one of them replied, "and you were talking away to yourself as hard as you could!"

That story seems to me to provide an interesting footnote to a story like the story of the walk to Emmaus and, of course, the Society for Psychical Research have in their records a large number of such experiences, well authenticated. May it not be that on certain occasions, depending possibly on the strength or character of the spirit who has passed over, and partly on the necessity on this side, that a spirit, after death, cannot only manifest its presence through our senses, but clothe itself in some etheric body which produces in us an impression of a physical body and which can be assumed or discarded at will? In the story I have just narrated the woman who called on the minister rang the bell, walked along with the minister and talked with him, and yet when the door was opened, apparently no one was there. This is something very different from the popular idea of a ghost whose form is so intangible that it can be seen through! We remember how insistent Jesus was that they should not think of him as a ghost.²³ Jesus never merely "appears" to people after the resurrection. He always enters into relationships with them. If this story be accepted as throwing some kind of sidelight on the resurrection

²³ Luke 24. 39.

body of Jesus, then even incidents which describe him as eating, or Saint Thomas thrusting his hand into his side, and so on, fall, to some extent, into line. I repeat that a spirit may have the power to induce the impression that the body in which it manifests itself is physical. How this is done, of course, I have no means of guessing. The alternative, it seems to me, is to seek a way of proving that some of the post-resurrection stories are unauthentic. The story of the partaking of food, for instance, occurs only in Luke (24. 41-43). It is absent from John's parallel narrative (20. 19-25). "It belongs," says a modern scholar, "to the Synoptic cycle of unhistoric tradition, and is obviously a faint echo of John 21. 5-9 and 13. It is remarkable that in Luke's narrative of the supper at Emmaus, and in John's narrative of the breakfast on the shore of the lake, it is plainly implied that, while he gave food to his disciples, Jesus himself took none."²⁴

On the subject of the touching of the body,²⁵ Dr. David Smith has an illuminating note. The passage is wanting in John's parallel narrative. "Ignatius quotes the curious saying, though in a somewhat less gross form. 'Grasp, handle, and see me; I am not a bodiless demon;' and Jerome says that Ignatius quoted it from the Apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews. This reveals its nature. It is simply one of these unhistorical traditions which floated about the primitive church, and Luke, ever watchful for new material, heard it, and incorporated it into his Gospel. Saint Luke's story of the journey to Emmaus, and Saint John's narrative²⁶

²⁴ Luke 24. 30; John 21. 12-13.

²⁵ Luke 24. 39.

²⁶ John 20. 21.

are the authentic and indubitable documents, and the rest of the evangelical material²⁷ though valuable as testifying to the fact of the resurrection is merely a report of common talk, bristling with contradictions. Here occur all the embarrassing crudities."²⁸ Personally, however, I would prefer to accept all the stories and await further light by which to understand them.

We pass now to the significance of the resurrection story for us. I think that the main significance is not that the resurrection of Jesus proves the immortality of all men. On Easter Sunday we generally sing, "Made like him, like him we rise," but whether we are made like him or not, we certainly do not rise as he did. No man has ever risen from the dead in the same way as Jesus, and it is not sound to argue that because something happens to a unique Personality it will be the lot of all men. I most steadfastly believe in the personal survival of death on the part of everybody, but in my view the grounds for belief in personal immortality are not based on the resurrection of Jesus. As I have tried to show elsewhere, there are other grounds for believing in our personal survival.²⁹ The significance of the resurrection, in my view, is that Jesus lives forever, is forever available to us, and that the power manifested in his resurrection is the power

²⁷ Matthew 27. 62-66; 28. 11-15; 16. 20; Mark 16. 1-8; Luke 23. 56 to 24. 1-11 and 36-53.

²⁸ David Smith, *The Days of His Flesh*, p. 44, Introduction. (Hodder & Stoughton). Note that a suggestion has been made that Acts 10. 40-41 seems to infer that Peter represents the risen Christ as eating and drinking. "It is probable that 'after he rose from the dead' depends on verse 40, the intervening words being parenthetical. 'Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, that did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead'" (British Weekly, February 12, 1920).

²⁹ See *After Death*, pp. iff.

at our disposal. The triumphant message of Easter day is that Jesus Christ is alive and that he proved his survival in a way which convinced his disciples and sent them out in the face of all that persecution could do, to lay down their lives for the truth of that mighty fact.

Once that is granted, where is the point in history on which we can put our finger and say, "After this Jesus never manifested his risen presence again"? We shall have something later to say in the chapter on the ascension about his visible presence, but to say that Jesus, at any point in history, ceased to manifest himself to those who loved and sought him, is to pit our miserable little bit of disbelief against not only the findings of the greatest scholars for two thousand years but against the recorded experiences of all the saints as well.

There are many miracles in life that are not often described as such. I know of no greater miracle than this: that the Jesus who lived, and loved, and laughed, and toiled, and suffered, and died, and rose, and ascended is nearer to everyone of us than any form of words can describe. We sometimes say that he is near us, and we think of a form bending over us, a hand upon our shoulder, a voice that charms our ear, a face that searches our hearts. But his nearness is even more intimate than that, and when we say that he can dwell in our hearts, even then the experience is greater, more intimate, than our poor words can ever describe. Is there any miracle in the world greater than this, that at this moment he is nearer to us than to Mary in the garden, that he calls our name, needs our love, pleads for our discipleship, longs for

our loyalty? If that really once dawned upon us, we should not be able to do other than say what Mary said, in the same spirit of utter loyalty, obedience, and adoration, "Oh, my great Master."

XVI

ASCENSION

If Love should count you worthy, and should deign
One day to seek your door and be your guest,
Pause! ere you draw the bolt and bid him rest,
If in your old content you would remain,
For not alone he enters; in his train
Are angels of the mist, the lonely guest,
Dreams of the unfulfilled and unpossessed,
And sorrow, and Life's immemorial pain.

He wakes desires you never may forget,
He shows you stars you never saw before.
He makes you share with him, for evermore,
The burden of the world's divine regret.
How wise you were to open not! and yet,
How poor if you should turn him from the door!
—*Sidney Royse Lysaght.*

PRAYER

O God, Author of the world's joy. Bearer of the world's pain, make us *glad* that we are men and women who have inherited the world's burden; deliver us from the luxury of cheap melancholy; and, at the heart of all our trouble and sorrow, let unconquerable gladness dwell. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.—*Henry S. Nash.*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

John 20. 11-18; Luke 24. 13-53; John 20. 19-25.

CHAPTER XVI

ASCENSION

“HE led them out until they were over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he departed from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God.”

That is the account of the ascension given by Saint Luke.¹ The conclusion of Saint Mark's Gospel is impressive although we are not sure that it was written by Saint Mark, because we know that the roll of papyrus on which the earliest copy of the Gospel was written was torn off at the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter. This tragedy² may have happened accidentally by the handling of the papyrus as it was passed round from church to church to be read to the people, or the work of Mark may never have been completed, or there may have been some other reason. At any rate, whoever added the last words strikes the same note, for we read, “So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that fol-

¹ Luke 24. 50-53.

² A tragedy surely, for it is possible that Saint Mark, to whom we owe so much, may have had some explanation of the way in which Jesus conveyed to his disciples the certainty they had that his “going” was only from their sight.

lowed.”³ We notice the words, “the Lord working with them.” Saint Matthew and Saint John give no account of the ascension, but Saint Matthew rounds off his Gospel with these ringing words ascribed to Jesus: “All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

I wanted to quote the words of the evangelists which complete their account of the life of Jesus, because in each case the note struck is one of triumph and joy. Our familiarity with the language in which this is expressed may have blinded us to its significance. Some of us have stood on a railway platform waving our hand as the train carried away, perhaps for many gray years, one whom we dearly loved. Or we have stood on a dock side until a steamer got so far away that it was futile to stand waving any more, when one who had filled all our life with sunshine and joy and fellowship, passed out of sight to accomplish some new task. We have felt at such times the unutterable sadness of farewell, and we feel we know the anguish in those lines of Tennyson:

“The barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink like some full-breasted swan,
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume
And takes the flood with swarthy webs.
Long stood Sir Bedevere, revolving many memories,
Till the hull looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.”

³ Mark 16. 19-20.

We should have expected to read an account of the ascension like this: "And it came to pass that he parted from them and was carried up into heaven, and they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with hot tears that blinded their eyes and with hearts breaking with the sorrow of farewell. And they said one to another, 'It was very beautiful while it lasted, and now we must get on without him in a world which, in his absence, has turned cold and bleak and gray.'" One would have expected their minds to be weighed down with the sad thought of those happy days that could never be again. "So sad, so strange, the days that are no more."

There is nothing of this sort in the New Testament. They returned with great joy. Jesus is the only great Man who ever lived about whom no one has written any memorial verses. No one strewed flowers on his grave. The mind goes naturally to those haunting stanzas written by Tennyson when his friend, Arthur Hallam, died. Every form of art in the world has been employed on the subject of Jesus except the lament and the dirge. "No apostle, no New Testament writer," says Doctor Denney, "ever *remembered* Christ." And commenting on this Dr. George Jackson says: "The saying is half paradox and all truth—all truth at least in this sense, that they never thought of Him as belonging to the past. He was never simply a gracious and pathetic tradition. They never mourned for him as for a friend they had lost."⁴

There is, then, only one conclusion to be reached about the significance of the ascension. It was not in any sense good-by. There was no sense of sorrow be-

⁴ *Our Common Faith*, p. 82. Hodder & Stoughton.

cause they had no sense that they had lost him. The ascension marks the completion of a ministry, beginning with the resurrection, in which Jesus successfully aimed at carrying the sense of his presence beyond the need of the senses, so that without seeing, or hearing, or touching, they knew him to be near them forever. Indeed, it is not sufficient to say that the friendship they had with him in the days of his flesh survived his death and was continued after it. It was consummated after it. And when we read the New Testament carefully, and remember that the Epistles were written before the earliest Gospels, we recognize that the apostles preached his risen power and abiding presence more than they preached the glory and splendor of his life. It was only after the church had entered into a living fellowship with Christ in his risen power that it set itself to commit to writing the story of his earthly life, his death, and resurrection, and from the point of view of experience this was the order of events.

Let us look at this post-resurrection ministry a little more closely without discussing in detail all the appearances of Christ. Jesus appeared first to Mary in the garden, in circumstances whose sheer beauty and significance make the invention of the story an impossibility. He does not reveal himself to her suddenly, and the very Form which Mary saw, in its element of strangeness making her suppose that he was the gardener, had that quality of care for our mental poise so characteristic of Jesus. Had he suddenly appeared to her and been recognized, the shock might have been more than Mary could stand. Our minds can bear a gradual strain, but sometimes they cannot survive a

sudden shock. Mary's mind is already groping toward the truth when Jesus says, "Mary," with an inflection in his voice which makes her certain who it is. She throws herself at his feet and would have grasped them in the manner which the Oriental would adopt to-day. Jesus says, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father." Does not this sound like a cruel injunction? The explanation, of course, is that Jesus is trying to establish the sense of his real presence without the need of the senses. He has been compelled to use two of her senses in order to get through to her—her eyes and ears. He does not want her to use the sense of touch because he is trying to get her to the place where she will be independent of all her senses and be sure of his presence when she can neither see nor hear nor touch.⁵

At the end of Saint Luke's Gospel⁶ we have what George Eliot called the most beautiful story in the world, and here again there is not space to look at all the lovely things in the story of the walk to Emmaus. We may, however, imagine a man and his wife going home from the feast at Jerusalem bewildered and disconsolate because the death of Jesus was the death of all their hopes. We catch the infinite pathos in the word, "We hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel."⁷ They are arguing and discussing the situation when, without any flash of the supernatural, a Stranger is walking by their side. Characteristically he joins in the argument at the point which they had reached. Doctor Maltby, to whom I owe much of the

⁵ John 20. 11-18.

⁶ Luke 24. 13-35.

⁷ Luke 24. 21.

thought in the next three paragraphs, once characteristically said that "Jesus never takes you up in a lift, he always takes you upstairs." We are not whirled from one mental position to another with the mind confused and bewildered and unable to deal with the situation. Jesus has such respect for our mental processes that the mind can look back and follow the steps it has taken. The three travelers arrived at Emmaus with their minds kindling and a sense of meaning for them even in the tragedy which had knocked the bottom out of their universe. Then, just as we should know some of our friends a long way off by some familiar gesture, so they became sure of Jesus by the familiar way in which he broke a roll in half when he said grace. Luke, the doctor, used to noticing symptoms—little things that mean big things—says, "He became known to us in the breaking of the loaf." Immediately they know who it is he disappears. Why does he do this? Again so that they will be gradually led never to think of him as absent; never to depend on their senses as the only avenues of his approach.

They tramp back the seven and a half miles from Emmaus to Jerusalem, for it is a matter worth investigating. They find the eleven gathered together and the doors shut for fear, and as they wait with a kind of hush and awe falling upon their spirits, there again is the Face they most wanted to see, and the voice which, to them, was the most beautiful music in the world, saying as he had said so often, "Peace be unto you."

What happened? We have only to ask ourselves what would happen if, at this moment, there should stand before us, in visible form, the Saviour of the

world, coming to us on normal levels of the mind, speaking to us some reassuring personal word that showed that he understood us completely with all our sins and failings, and then disappearing and then appearing again as we sat down to meat, or went to our business, or prayed in our room. We should never know when he was not there. We should never interview an irritable customer without thinking of a Third at the interview. We should never know when he might be visibly present. We should always feel that he was never far away. This is exactly what happened to the disciples. He came, he disappeared. He was obvious and there, and then there but not obviously, seeming to know what had happened when they thought he had gone,⁸ until, at last, for them the whole earth filled with his glory. All appearances after the resurrection are part of this gracious ministry of taking the sense of his presence beyond the need of the senses. All of them, moreover, are characterized by one important factor which Doctor Denney has pointed out.⁹ "There is no such thing in the New Testament as an appearance of the risen Saviour in which he merely *appears*. He is always represented as entering into relations with those who see him in other ways than by a flash upon the inner or the outer eye." The ascension marks the end of that ministry. They seem clearly to have understood that he only went away from them in the sense that he went out of their sight. In no other sense had he gone. Indeed, his "going" seems to have brought to them a sense of presence far more effective than the appearances. The appearances

⁸ Compare John 20. 27.

⁹ James Denney, *Death of Christ*, p. 67.

must have been extremely emotional experiences. After the ascension his presence, as I have indicated elsewhere,¹⁰ was manifested to them not so much in terms of emotion as by the re-enforcement of the will and the dynamic of service. Only for a little while had they to tarry in Jerusalem; then they went forth, "the Lord working with them," to turn the whole world upside down.

It will hardly be necessary to press for the disentanglement of the true and valuable ideas in the ascension from the crude thought forms of the first century. Those who accept the view of a spiritual resurrection with a kind of dematerialization of the physical body such as is described by Sir Oliver Lodge in *Science and Human Progress*, and by Henry Latham, in *The Risen Master*, will not be faced with the difficulty of imagining a physical body passing into a spiritual world at the ascension. It is almost inconceivable to us that medieval universities seriously discussed not only the question of Christ's physical body going into heaven but also whether the body was taken up clothed or naked. To us the very idea seems crude and absurd.

Obviously, the very word "ascension" takes us back to primitive thought when heaven was thought of as up above us. The view of the ancients was that the earth was flat and the center of the solar system. The sky was a solid bowl inverted over it and heaven a definite region above that. Christ they thought of as going "beyond the skies" to heaven, and this view is still reflected in our hymns, partly because it is so hard to get words which express exactly what we

¹⁰ See *Jesus and Ourselves*, p. 249.

mean by an unseen world. Some hymns very definitely suggest the old cosmology:

"There is a Friend for little children
Above the bright blue sky."

In parenthesis it is interesting to notice that it is because people have clung to the thought forms of old which imagined Christ as going "up" through the clouds, that certain groups of people have long scanned the heavens expecting him to come "down." So we have among us to-day people called Second Adventists who believe that Christ will visibly return in the clouds.¹¹ What has happened is that they have forgotten to make allowances for the ancient view of heaven as up above the sky, and for Eastern apocalyptic language such as we have in the phrase "coming into the clouds of heaven." To many of us, not only have the prophecies of his coming again been fulfilled, but we feel that heaven is all round us, and though there may well be in the future a worthy climax to all human history, Christ will come to men as often as they open their hearts to him; and while there is a sense in which he is coming, there is a more true sense in which he is here, and we think it is true to psychology to say that if the mind is concentrated on some far future event, it is correspondingly hard to realize a present fact. Second Adventists should remind themselves that it was the people who expected him and whose literature was full of the promises of his coming who missed him when he did come because the manner of his coming did not fit their preconceptions. I know the devotional life of many splendid people is

¹¹ I have discussed this elsewhere. See *After Death*, Appendix 2.

quickened by the thought of a coming in physical terms.

"So I am watching quietly every day,
Whenever the sun shines brightly, I rise and say,
'Surely it is the shining of his face,'
And when a shadow falls across the room
Where I am working my appointed task,
I lift my head, and watch the door, and ask
If he is come."

But I want to ask what a physical coming would do for us that needs to be done? And if the answer be that Christ will come in mighty power and subject all things to himself, I, for one, hold tenaciously that even a physical coming would not alter the character of Jesus. Why should a physical coming make him coercive when in the days of his flesh he set all coercive methods on one side?

As these pages were being written, a lady said to the writer, "If only sometimes in answer to prayer, we could have a vision of his face, and hear his voice say to us, 'Peace be unto you.'" I do not think we must rule out as authentic the experiences of those who claim that they have had visions of Jesus. On the other hand, I do want to suggest three reasons for believing that the apprehension of Jesus through the senses is no longer to be considered the normal.

1. An actual vision of the spiritual which does not distress more than it helps probably requires certain psychological conditions in the mind of the visionary. Probably all the disciples had this psychological make-up. It may be that even the Master himself cannot "appear" except under certain conditions to those who "see." Consider, then, how misleading and

tragic it would be if some Westerner with a healthy virile faith discounted his sense of the presence of the Master by mistakenly believing that the only authentic sign of the presence was a visionary appearance.

2. In the second place, a vision does tend to suggest to some minds localization. There are many sacred spots in the world which are sacred because they have become linked with visions or other outward manifestations. Lourdes is an example of this. You can pray to Our Lady of Lourdes in London, or in New York, or anywhere you like, but hundreds of people go to Lourdes because that was the spot where she is said to have manifested herself. Now, Jesus' whole schooling to the disciples was intended to teach them that he is everywhere available, and that his presence did not depend on place. Recalling George MacDonald's famous lullaby,

"Where did you come from baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here,"

Doctor Maltby says, "When he had finished that which he came to do and had shown himself so that we knew him, it was expedient for us that he should go back out of the here into the everywhere, out of some men's sight that he might be near to all men's hearts."¹²

3. Manifestations of his presence through the senses, the hearing of voices, the seeing of visions would tend to produce for many of us a sense of the uncanny, and religion must integrate, not disintegrate the personality. Nervous balance and tension must not be endangered by religious experience but be built up by it. We notice the concern of Jesus in Luke 24. 37:

¹² *The Meaning of the Resurrection*, p. 18.

"They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. And he said unto them, "Why are ye troubled? And wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see." Further visions could teach us no more about the Master than we know already. He would not have ascended unless and until he had made the aid of eye and ear superfluous as aids to faith.

4. There is further significance of the ascension with which I should like to deal. It is in a sentence that man's true home is in the eternal world. To me it is an unspeakable joy to think that Christ, living in the eternal world in that position of authority and power which made the New Testament writers speak of him as sitting on the right hand of the throne of God, is still a Man. It takes the sheer naked terror of the other world right away to realize that the one with whom we have to do is Jesus of Nazareth, that nothing is true of the God of heaven and earth and hell that is not in harmony with the nature of the Jesus who walked and talked and loved and wept and suffered and died and rose in Palestine two thousand years ago. I know that Jesus will never be soft with us, that there is steel in his love as well as tenderness, but the realization of his humanity still retained in the eternal world is one of the greatest comforts in our faith, and I feel all the thrill of the incredulous joy in Jean Ingelow's lines:

"And didst thou love the race that loved not thee?
And didst thou take to heaven a human brow?
Dost plead with man's voice by the marvelous sea?
Art thou his kinsman now?"

It is not as though Jesus were God disguised as a Man, going through this world in disguise and taking his former status as a dehumanized God—if the crude expression can be allowed—and becoming something strange and terrifying and outside all our categories of thought. Jesus was not God disguised as a Man, but God revealed in man. Jesus will always be human, and in the highest heaven there is this Lover of our souls not the less divine because he is forever perfectly human. And when we pass over, we shall be received by One who will never be ashamed to call us brethren. It is that for which the human spirit longs.

God, who at our birth, provided for our loneliness, giving us to be born into loving arms, smiled upon by loving eyes, will take away all the terror of death, and our birth into a new world will have no terrors for the Great Lover of Souls will receive us, and death makes its darkness an embrace if he be there to welcome us. The mystics thought of him as so near that they used to say that the saintly martyr could scarcely distinguish between the flash of the executioner's sword and the sheen on Christ's garments.

"'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that
I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever; a Hand like this
hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the
Christ stand."

The thought that man's true home is in the Eternal involves a further thought of which the ascension of

Jesus is forever the witness. It is that eternal values are the things that matter. We pass our life here, it may be, in wealth and comfort, it may be in distress and poverty. We tend to think much of wealth and fame and cleverness and health and social position. We tend to feel that life is defrauding us and hard to us when these things are not ours. The loss of some of them merits for most of us the use of the word "calamity." Certainly, life for hundreds of people is full of perplexity. Saintly men are overwhelmed in financial disaster. Good women are overcome by disease. Life is spoiled by sin. Friends we thought we could trust disappoint us. Life sometimes seems an awful muddle, and in moments of depression we feel that the things we are told to believe in do not count, after all; that there is injustice and confusion everywhere. As the Archbishop of York said at Oxford, it is just as though someone got into the shop window of life and when no one was looking, changed the labels round so that valuable things were priced low and worthless things priced high.

I shall never forget a conversation I once had with the late Studdert Kennedy. A friend he called Peter had said to him: "Go on, Studdert. More strength to your elbow, but men are not what you think they are. They are just poor, blind, stupid animals. They sent my lad to hell and they will send both yours. There isn't a God."

Kennedy replied, "I believe there is, Peter."

"Yes, I know you do," said the other, "but where is he? He never does anything. He does not even save the righteous. He never shows himself at all."

Kennedy said, "Well, what is your alternative?"

"Oh," the man said, "I know what you mean. A God of love, who suffers and endures."

"Yes," said Kennedy, "that is the only way. A God who suffers and endures in our suffering and endurance."

But we must not stop at the God who suffers and endures. We must add the words, "and the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven."

Life may be to you a muddle which even death does not disentangle. Men have said again and again, "Well, this is the end." On the first Good Friday night, eleven men in deepest dejection said that. *But it was only the end of their mistake.* Our values ultimately are vindicated. Love is never finally conquered. In the place where love is crucified there is always a garden, and in the garden lilies. Among the lilies which spring from pain and anguish men have met him, the ever Risen and Ascended, and found that when they saw his face, they had no question left to ask.

XVII

ENTHRONEMENT

"In his mysterious humility, he tends the last smoldering lamp in every rebellious heart. He is, we find, the Friend of every hard-pressed generosity in a base heart. It is he who defends the last strip of territory against the invasion of passion when all the rest is gone, and raises mysterious defenses about beleaguered virtues whose doom seemed sure. . . . He loves this human life of ours not only as a moralist approving where it is good and disapproving where it is bad, but as a poet or an artist loves it, because he cannot help loving a thing so strange, piteous, and enthralling as the story of every human soul must be."—*W. R. Maltby, The Letters of Miriam Gray.*

PRAYER

O God, save us from offering unto thee any prayer which we are not prepared that thou shouldst answer. Save us from praying to know thy will unless we are prepared to do it. Save us from praying to see thy face unless we are prepared that the vision should burn all the self out of us and make us let go our hateful little sins. Save us from asking for world vision, till we are ready to face world responsibilities. Save us from asking that we may follow Christ counting not his lonely way, his utter sacrifice, his broken heart.

Take us very quietly each one and shut us in with thyself. It may be thou art going to ask one of us to step right out to world adventure. It may be thou art going to ask a harder thing—that we should see all the need of the world and long to serve it in far-off lands and yet stay just where we are. It may be thou wilt call us to pray more, to give, or to understand better. Only show us thy will, and make us want to do it more than anything else in the world—and in that doing find *life*.

We ask it for the honor of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Ephesians 1. 15 to 2. 10; Revelation 5. 9-14; 11. 15; 13. 8; 22. 1-5.

CHAPTER XVII

ENTHRONEMENT¹

WHAT a note of triumph there is in the New Testament! The story of Jesus begins with the songs of angels crying, "Peace on earth, among the men of good will," and ends with the Hallelujah Chorus sung by all the ransomed hosts of heaven. The New Testament writers not only teach as the climax to their story that Jesus is the ever near and available Friend whose presence strengthens the will, deepens the love, inspires the service of those who seek him, but also they glory in the thought of Jesus risen, ascended, and glorified. They could not hold both those thoughts together in their minds, if they had supposed Jesus as sitting on the throne of God in some distant heaven beyond the sky. Their constant references to his reign and his exalted state² are triumphant declarations that death could not hold him, that the worst that evil could do fell away helpless, that his values were vindicated and his faith justified, that his love conquered all the power of hate and malevolence, and that these facts were not only wrought out in history but were eternal truths that lit up forever the character of God and the manner of his dealings with men. Side by side with the thought of the ever-present Christ,

¹ The substance of this chapter was broadcast in the National Wireless Program May 22, 1932, and is included here by permission of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

² There are over thirty references to the throne in the book of Revelation alone. Compare also Revelation 11. 15.

Paul glorifies in a Christ who sits in the heavenly places, "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."³ "He must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet."⁴ "God hath highly exalted him, and given unto him a name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."⁵ The New Testament writers realize that what has happened in their experience is no mere hold-and-corner affair which affects them alone. It is not as though they became friendly with One who lived a beautiful life, died a dreadful death, and with whom they were enabled to establish contact after death. What had happened was of infinite importance to the whole world, to all mankind, to every race.

But we must pass from this attractive picture of Christ exalted and enthroned to ask whether that picture really represents reality. I remember hearing a preacher say that if Saint Paul had turned east instead of west, Christ would never have conquered the Western world. But can anybody honestly say that Christ has conquered the Western world? We may, if we like, make comparisons with things that happen in the dark places of India, or Africa, or China, and find there convincing evidence of what his spirit has

³ Ephesians 1. 21.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 15. 25.

⁵ Philippians 2. 10-12.

wrought in the West. And far be it from me to belittle what he has done in the West. His spirit has been the dynamic of a thousand philanthropies which never consciously acknowledge him. His power brought into being many of the laws on our statute books. It is significant that every newspaper and every document in Europe readjusts its date to his birth and, often unconsciously, pays its tribute to his sway. The whole texture of our Western civilization would be reduced to a tattered rag if the threads he spun in Galilee were removed from it. But let any man go into the slums of one of our great cities, say on a winter's Saturday night, slums in which men and women are herded together so that even one room is sometimes shared by more than one family; where men and women, to escape the intolerable conditions of those slums, are pressing into the public houses, trying to get some measure of merriment and forgetfulness; leaving outside—what I have frequently seen in one city—a row of perambulators with white-faced children, often waiting there in the rain till closing time while father and mother drink themselves silly inside; slums in which gambling and immorality are rife; where there are

“Children conceived and born in sin,
Rotten with syphilis, soaked in gin,
Housed like pigs in their filthy stys,
Cursed from the day they opened their eyes,”

and such an observer will find it hard to say that Jesus reigns. “There are slums,” says Mr. Hugh Redwood, “where all the social senses appear to be dulled; whence

⁶ Studdert Kennedy, *Food for the Fed-Up*, p. 285.

all feeling of degradation appears to have long departed; there are terrible streets and dens in which there is a fierce and callous pride, astonishing to encounter and difficult beyond conception to overcome. . . . There are landlords by the score upon whom must be laid a terrible responsibility—the responsibility for innocence defiled, intellect depraved, body and soul destroyed in the satisfaction of the house-farmer's unscrupulous greed." Listen to these two brief notes out of many made by an observer: "Old lady, within shadow of Abbey, in a cellar kitchen. Dying. No gas—candle in a jar. Rats running all over the room. Old lady whispered she killed one on her bed Tuesday. . . ." And this, from the record of a Sunday-morning visit in a southern town: "She was soaking some hard crusts in a bowl, with the intention of making a bread pudding for her family of six little children. The husband, a consumptive, is unable to work; the only income £1 a week from the Guardians. The rent is 12s. a week; the remaining 8s. is all they have to exist on. Two hours later another baby was born, making the seventh. Her greatest worry was not for herself, but to know who was going to feed her little ones while she was in bed."⁷

How can anyone who knows our slums—some of them owned by Ecclesiastical Commissioners and some by landlords who live in luxury—say that Jesus reigns?

Or take our modern competitive business and industrial life, with its antagonism that rarely stays to see another's point of view, its restless, feverish quest to make money on the one hand, and to spend it on pleasure on the other, with its unscrupulous overriding

⁷ *God in the Slums*, pp. 20 ff.

of the rights of personality, its carelessness of spiritual things, and its pagan emphasis on selfishness, and ask yourself whether you can say, "Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory." There are men, wistful for better things, who just feel held down in the grip of an awful machine in which they cannot be and do what their best impulses dictate, unless they bring down those who depend on them to the edge of the gutter.

Taking a yet wider view, we find that all through our national and international life there are elements of bitter and unforgiving hostility. There is a so-called patriotism that is an enemy of the kingdom of God, a patriotism that utters that narrow and bitter cry, "Ourselves alone," and that has no intention of treating members of other nations as real brothers if there is any question of the sacrifice of profits or status: a refusal even to try out the principles of Jesus lest some precious prestige should be lost or some narrow dominance should be sacrificed, or some political party ridiculed. Some of us have passed through a war that has shaken civilization to its foundations, and yet, even yet, we could not truly be said to have learned its lessons, for it has left us suspicious, distrustful, selfish, and afraid to disarm. War is a greater atheism than any refusal to believe in an intellectual concept. But the elements that go to make it are still in our midst. How, then, can we sing that Jesus reigns? Is not the truth, rather, that we have never taken Jesus seriously?

We do not find it difficult to worship him, but so often worship is a dismissal of him. Beautiful cathedrals, with their stained-glass windows and ornate ceremonies cry, "Lord, Lord." Hearty Methodist anthems

and hymns cry "Crown him." Creeds recite his qualities and praise his mighty deeds. Litanies cry to him in supplication. Poetry falls before him in adoration. Music lifts his name to the skies, and all these things have their place. But all can blunt the keen edge of his demands, dim the terrible burning of his eyes, cry "Lord, Lord," and do not the things that he says do. As Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick once said: "We do not fail to set him in the light of beauty. We fail to set him in the light of duty. But Jesus did not say, 'Worship me.' He said, 'Follow me.' A great soul does not want his ego idolized; he wants his cause supported."

Are we, then, to dismiss this image of a reigning Jesus? Are we to say that there is no truth in that picture which the New Testament writers painted in such glowing colors, in the idea to which they clung so tenaciously? I do not think we must let the idea go, though, like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we must say, "We see *not yet* all things subjected to him, But now we see . . . Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor."⁸ If *we* find it hard honestly to think of Jesus as reigning, what about the early disciples? They clung to the idea that he must reign until he had put all his enemies under his feet, and they clung to it through darker days than we have ever seen or ever shall see. Let me suggest two reasons why I think we must keep the idea of the regnant Christ before us. The first is that when the evils we have mentioned are confronted with his power and his spirit, they disappear. It is not as though we made a pessimistic list of the evils that curse the world, wringing our hands because we know no cure for them.

⁸ Hebrews 2. 9.

When we are bold enough to apply the solution implicit in the Christian revelation and attack them in Christ's name, we can overcome them. In this sense he reigns now. He never coerces. He never forces his way. But he longs with an intolerable longing to vanquish them, and can do so when we seek his help and apply his methods.

In the second place we are so near these evils that their bulk obscures our vision. Look back a little. How pitifully futile and unimportant must have seemed that handful of lowly men and women, not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty, meeting together literally in the "holes of the earth" in the catacombs of Rome, or perhaps in a disused quarry, singing hymns to Christ as God! How feeble the early church must have seemed compared with the might of imperial Rome! Who could ever have supposed that that might would pass away? But in Rome itself to-day the only ancient building still in use is a great cathedral raised up to the glory of Christ called the Cathedral of Saint Peter. If we had seen a Man standing before the judgment seat of Pilate, standing there forsaken, beaten, betrayed, alone; if we had heard the mob below scream, "Crucify him," and watched the representative of imperial Rome, in whose hands were the issues of life and death, wash his hands and allow the Prisoner to be crucified, should we not have said: "It was a beautiful life. What a pity it should end thus"? Never for a moment should we have supposed that we were watching the judgment, not of Jesus, but of Pilate. We should never have dreamed that the hands which presently would be nailed to the cross were the hands which finally would mold the world.

Think of Greece. If we had stood on the outskirts of the crowd on Mars' Hill and listened while a deformed tentmaker preached the simple gospel of Jesus to the arbiters of the world's culture, art, literature, philosophy, even religion, should we not have sympathized with those who, with a contemptuous curl of the lips wondered at the daring of Paul, who talked of a crucified Carpenter to those who had Plato and Aristotle as their teachers? So they sneered Paul out of their city much as many cultured pagans to-day dismiss religion with a shrug of the shoulders, as though to be religious were to be old-fashioned, obscurantist, or mentally feeble. Let us take courage! Every day some heart for the first time bows in allegiance to Him whose name is above every name. Every moment his kingdom is extending. I believe with all my heart that slowly, sometimes imperceptibly, and sometimes with many drawbacks, the tides of his kingdom are coming in. We can all point to evils in our midst that almost freeze the blood and paralyze faith. No words would be strong enough to condemn them. We need every voice and every hand to banish them. But they are being banished. Stand on the shore and you will not be certain for a moment whether the tide is coming in or going out. One wave advances to your feet but half a dozen seem to deny any advance. Come back in an hour. The tide is up to the cliffs. It is so in the things of the spirit. One wave—church attendance, for example—is no witness to the set of the tide.

"Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main."⁹

Like the yeast gradually changing the mass from cell to cell, so I believe gradually the whole of society is being changed. That is a figure which Jesus used. Take another figure of his. "As the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man." Secretly the Kingdom spreads in men's hearts. Here and there flashes of it are seen: in individual lives, noble deeds, lowly heroism, selfless acts, great movements, wide reforms; flashes only, but significant. Behind the clouds that obscure the progress of God's eternal purposes the power grows and gathers in strength. Sometimes a great part of the sky seems aflame, as when the world is captivated by an ideal like that, say, of the League of Nations. One day the fire shall burst forth—when the clouds are dispersed forever—into one flaming response to Love Infinite.

But what is the ground of our certainty? May it not be that the forces of materialism and selfishness may become too great and Christianity become an effete and dead religion? I think we must base our certainty where the apostles based theirs: that in Christ God had spoken finally and completely and shown men his way of life. They believed that in him are implicit the solutions of all our problems. Such solutions will not, I think, be found by taking up this or that saying of Jesus and supposing that a saying here or a saying there finally decides an issue in the twentieth

⁹ Arthur Hugh Clough.

century. We found during the Great War how hopeless texts could be bandied about by pacifists and militarists alike. But by the application of the spirit of Jesus I believe we shall solve all our problems, and I believe there is no other solution. If there is one sentence the truth of which I become more and more sure as the years pass, it is that great word of Doctor Maltbie that "Life will only work one way, and that is God's way." "I am ready to admit," says Mr. Bernard Shaw, "that after contemplating the world and human nature for nearly sixty years, I see no way out of the world's misery but the way which would have been found by Christ's will if he had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman." We may be glad that Saint Paul did not take sixty years to be sure of this, but we may be glad also of the testimony of one who, in this century, is read more than Saint Paul.

Indeed, have we not tried every other way and found it to fail? Men are choosing Jesus rather than Barabbas, as Mr. Shaw, in the same essay,¹⁰ points out, not because they are in love with Jesus, but because Barabbas for all his violent power and vulgar wealth is such a gloomy failure. Men will always ask, "Why shouldn't I do this and that selfish thing?" and often cannot be answered by what they would dub a religious appeal. But there is an answer which will convince everybody at long last. It is that Christ's is the only way which will, in the long run, work. However high we carry our heads they will be bowed before him at last.

In international relationships we are at last being pushed, not so much through any religious urge, but

¹⁰ Preface to "*Androcles and the Lion*."

through the very pressure of the situations that arise, toward that spirit of world brotherhood which Jesus taught. There is no other way in which the family of nations can get on together save by loving and trusting one another.

In our social relationships we meet the same thing. Strike and lockout, dissatisfaction and distrust, hostility between capital and labor follow every attempt at the maintenance of pride, selfishness, and materialism, so that we are driven to get together and understand one another's point of view. And we shall have to do so more and more. Many problems which seem domestic can only be solved internationally. We may well have to come to an international agreement, for instance, as to who shall make certain things, and where, and for how much, and under what conditions, before those things can be put into our hands without violating the principles of the Sermon on the Mount and the sacred rights of personality. And that spirit must be fostered, I repeat, not only because it is the way Christ commanded but because it is the only way that will work.

In our individual life the same thing is true. Life will only work in God's way. We are subtly invited to realize our personalities. But pure hedonism is an effete cult. You cannot even realize yourself by yourself. Still the word stands. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. There are many voices to-day which call us to make pleasure our God, voices that suggest sexual license, free love, and so on—voices that are not necessarily insincere but which suppose that happiness can be reached by a consideration of selfish in-

terests only. I have yet to find the man or woman who has tried these ways and is entirely satisfied by them. The great condemnation of the new morality—apart from the fact that it is not morality and certainly not new—is that it does not work. The sense of liberty, freedom, happiness does not dawn. The goods promised are not delivered. The experiment ends in disillusionment, disappointment, disgust, and despair.

We live in an age of revolt. Youth has only to find a thing is a convention to feel that that is good enough reason for smashing it. "Freedom!" cries youth. "Let us have done with rules!" So youth rushes up this and that road of liberty. I have seen men and women coming back along those roads wherein so much was promised, broken, disillusioned, heartbroken, with all the song gone from their hearts and from their eyes, brave as they are. It is as though internationally, socially, individually we had raced along a number of roads only to find at the end of them a strong iron paling with a large notice bearing the inscription "*No Thoroughfare.*"

Jesus reigns forever upon the throne of God. Does he? It depends on you how soon his kingdom shall come; on your abdication of the throne of your own life in his favor, for the throne of God is the human heart. Jesus reigns in highest heaven over all the angelic host. But the throne of God as far as it concerns us is the human heart. Let me affectionately press you to enthrone him there. Many things may have hindered you. You may have been forced to go to church three or four times a day, and now religion may seem to you a tyranny in which you will be no longer enslaved. The disunion of Christendom and

the bitterness of feeling between some sects may have shocked you deeply. To you religion may be mainly a thing about which people quarrel. The unworthy lives of many so-called Christians may have made you cynical. Services may bore you, creeds bewilder you, ritual alienate you, sermons irritate you. "There are as good people outside the church as in it," you may say, and forthwith go your way.

But are you quite sure that your criticisms are not really excuses? Are you certain that you are not hiding behind them from the searching appeal which Christ makes for your complete and entire surrender? You are afraid of committing yourself lest you be dubbed hypocrite or "goody-goody"? Are you afraid that he might ask you to give up something to which you cling—some business method which you would fain shield from his searching eyes? some secret sin from which you will not break away? some unworthy quest of wealth, some self-centered lust for power, some hot intent on pleasure, some lingering pride, some fear of what people might say or think or do? Are you afraid of giving yourself to him utterly, lest, yielding to his strong demands, you might become more than you dare to be? Or you don't believe what the churches teach. Perhaps you have never stripped his message of those accretions to it which have become substitutes for it.

Let me plead with the reader in these last paragraphs. Jesus does not ask for adherence to any creed, any ritual, any ceremony. Nor must you judge him by those in whom his work is just begun. Look at him, not at those of us who are supposed to represent him. Make as many contacts as you can with him and ask

yourself these questions: Is there any way of living which offers more than his way? Is there any road that leads you nearer where you want, in your best moments, to be? Is there any better way out of the awful muddle and unrest in which all the world is seething than the way which would begin to open at once to us if Jesus reigned supremely in all men's hearts?

And we must begin with ourselves. Can I hope that he will conquer the world if he has not conquered my heart? Can I expect him to establish world peace if the territories of my being are in tumult with one another and with him? Can he have his way in society if, merely critical, I give him no chance to have his way with me? Can he change selfishness into unselfish service, lust into purity, ill temper into kindness, if I don't surrender my whole being to him? No man can make a greater contribution to those pressing problems which distress us all in these days than in the silence of his own spirit to abdicate in favor of Christ, to surrender his whole being to him; to let Christ dictate his every action and his every attitude, and in the realm of his own life to make Jesus King. He will not wrest that throne from you. He waits for you to offer it to him. Why does the Kingdom tarry? Because the King waits to be enthroned in the human heart. When that happens, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. And he shall reign forever and ever.

XVIII

AVAILABILITY

William Watson's fine poem "Estrangement" is so apt a description of those who, shut within the prison bars of convention and pride, have no real experience of Christ and religion, that I quote it here in this sense, with the acknowledgment that I am wresting its original sense for my purpose.

I seem to see an alien shade pass by,
A spirit wherein I have no lot or part.
Thus may a captive, in some fortress grim,
From casual speech betwixt his warders, learn
That June on her triumphant progress goes
Through arched and bannered woodlands; while for him
She is a legend emptied of concern,
And idle is the rumor of the rose.

—*William Watson.*

PRAYER

Father, who hast told us to listen to thy voice, give us ears to hear thy lightest whisper. The daily work and the rush of life around us make such a noise that it is difficult to be quiet before thee, and so we lose the sound of thy voice. Teach us how to be more still. Teach us how to shut our doors around us to all other thoughts and to make deep silence in our hearts. Then speak to us, and we shall be strong to hear, strong to do, strong to follow thee utterly. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Health and Healing

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Luke 24. 13-35.

CHAPTER XVIII

AVAILABILITY

THIS chapter is in the nature of an Epilogue. The book was completed and the typescript prepared. But I was greatly dissatisfied. The greatest significance of Christ for our daily life is that he is still available. He can still take charge of our feeble little lives and, by his transforming friendship make them brave and pure and good. I believe he changed lives like that in the days of his flesh. It was not so much the ideas which he gave men's minds that they might understand. Not the ritual which he instituted that they might see and enter in. Not the organization that he began that men might carry it on and do good in the world. If we could live in the physical presence of Jesus for a week, we should be changed men and women. If we could live with him for a *day*, he would change our whole point of view. It would be a very surgical experience. All our defenses would go down in the first hour. All our pride would crumble. All the excuses we make for ourselves, the lies behind which we hide, the comparisons with others which help us not to feel quite such awful sinners after all, the rationalizations by which we pretend to ourselves that our sins are, after all, not really sins for us—all this would go before the burning of his eyes, as lurking mists steal away ashamed before the coming of the sun. But he would not leave us there. He believes in us when we no longer believe in ourselves, loves us when we hate ourselves, forgives

us when we cannot forgive ourselves. The surgery done, he would nurse us back to spiritual health and then send us out to heal others in his name. Yes, if only we could live with him for a day.

It isn't that we don't believe in a living Christ. Proofs of the resurrection are not what we need. Most of us accept those. In fact, there is scarcely anything more that we need to *know* about him. We just need to know him. Some of us have been reared in Christian homes, studied his life, meditated on his deeds, listened to innumerable sermons, attended group discussions, read books about him, and even preached sermons about him. Our minds are full of ideas. Then one day we have sat down and admitted to ourselves that there was no reality in it all for us. We believe that he survived death, but that he is not alive *for us*. He is not changing us. We read or hear the glowing experiences of others. We long for a similar experience ourselves. Indeed, the longing in some hearts has had a pathological result. For some have simulated it and pretended they had it. Others have grown bitter and resentful that it seems to have passed them by. Others again have supposed that there cannot be more in it than they have already discovered.

The last is particularly the position of those who have been brought up in Christian homes, those who hold office, and those in the ministry. Partly our trouble is pride. We don't think it likely that others can tell us anything, or have anything in religion that we, its official believers and exponents, have missed. Partly it is that we are so familiar with the jargon that we have missed the reality. Many a doctor is ill because in his heart of hearts he doesn't believe in the

remedies which he so constantly offers to others. And the children of Christian homes have been—as someone truly said—so inoculated with small doses of Christianity that they can't catch it. This is not an argument against the Christian home, but against an inoculation with the wrong substance.¹

The difficulty for thousands in our land who are seeking the full Christian experience—the possession of which makes the book of Acts one of the most thrilling in the world and the absence of which makes our conventional, respectable “Christian” lives so dull and drab—is that we *know* but do not realize. We know what Christianity teaches. But we have never entered into the new world which Christ offers. To be perfectly honest, we simply do not possess what the New Testament calls “life.” We could not sincerely say with Paul, “I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.”²

And there is all the difference in the world between knowing and realizing. In psychological treatment it is a difference between success and failure. For instance, supposing someone has done wrong to another, or done anything for which he despises himself. From knowing, in such a case, there is set up in the mind what the psychologist calls conscience distress. The mind keeps going back to the sin committed and torturing the person concerned in a way which has to be seen to be believed. Sometimes something done a score of years ago will, through conscience distress, produce

¹ Often “you must” instead of “you may.”

² Galatians 2. 20.

a condition of complete breakdown. Supposing we say to such a person, "God forgives you." He will say, "Yes, I know," but he does not *know*. That is to say, he knows the theological fact that when a man is sorry for something done and is prepared to put it right as far as he can, that God will forgive it, but he only knows it as an intellectual fact. He does not know it as a realized fact of experience. He does not, with his whole being, accept the idea that God has put it behind his back to be remembered no more forever; that God has blotted it out, has restored so completely the relationship which sin had spoiled that the *relationship* is as though the man had never sinned. When that dawns upon his mind, and only then, he can forgive himself, and it is a very humbling and cleansing experience. It is expressed in the lines of the hymn which says,

"In wonder lost with trembling joy
We take the pardon of our God."

When that happens, the healing of the mind begins, for what was known is realized.

One of the classical instances of this is the case of John Wesley. For years he was a cultured, conscientious, Christian clergyman, taking his religion far more seriously than most of us do ours, working, indeed, as a missionary in Georgia, saying his prayers, reading his Bible. If you had asked him about the doctrine of forgiveness, he would have been able to give you unsailable evidence for its validity, and he was that kind of clergyman for ten years. Then came that amazing experience in a little room in Aldersgate Street, when he met the living Jesus and he says, "I felt that I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an

assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." For ten years he had known this, and then it dawned upon him and became a real fact of *experience*. Wesley then for the first time received what the New Testament calls life, and he went out like a blazing torch lighted at the altar of God to set all England on fire.

Here is Doctor Dale, minister of one of the most famous free churches in England, preaching every Sunday to vast and appreciative congregations; preaching every Easter Sunday on the risen Christ. Then, half way through the making of an Easter sermon he rises from his study chair. Something has happened. Jesus Christ has come alive *for him*. "Surely," you say, "he knew that before. Surely, the minister of Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham, knew the proofs of the resurrection and could have convinced anyone that Christ was alive." Listen, then, to what he himself says: "'Christ is alive,' I said to myself: 'alive!' and then I paused: 'alive!' and then I paused again; 'alive!' Can that really be true? Living as really as I myself am? I got up and walked about repeating 'Christ is living! Christ is living!' At first it seemed strange and hardly true, but at last it came upon me as a burst of sudden glory—yes, Christ is living! *It was to me a new discovery*. I thought that all along I had believed it; but not until that moment did I feel sure about it. I then said, 'My people shall know it; I shall preach about it again and again until they believe it as I do now.'"³

The situation, then, is this. Jesus Christ is alive.

³ A. W. Dale, *Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham*, p. 642.

He offers to us here and now his friendship. On spiritual levels he can still do for us what his friendship did for men and women in the days of his flesh. In other words, there is an experience of Christ possible for everybody. It will not be just like anyone else's experience. It is not to be measured merely in terms of feeling. And we are not to look for an experience but to look for him. But the fact remains that if we are sincere and honest with ourselves and with him and really want to live his quality of life; if truly we surrender every area of our life to him and ask only to be shown his will for us, he will bring us through to a life marked by power, serenity, and joy which will be independent of all that can happen to us on this earth; a life in which the only dissatisfaction that remains is that all others the wide world over have not entered it also.

Clearly, then, we must turn now to this question: How can a thought which the mind accepts become an experience by which the soul lives? Equally clear it is that what is needed is not further argument. Presuming, then, that we are really penitent, that our mind retains no animosity against any person whatsoever, that we are not secretly clinging to any known sin but truly desire to be rid of it, that we are prepared to surrender ourselves completely to Christ in order to find our new life in him, let us ask what still remains to be done.

As I turn the pages of the New Testament I do not find "Ten directions to be followed by those who would find Christ," "Twelve reasons for believing that he is alive," "Fourteen reasons for supposing that he can save sinners." Rather, as I try to follow the guidance

of those who knew him best, they seem to say three things:

1. Look at him.
2. Believe in him.
3. Come into the fellowship.

In the concluding paragraphs I want to write very practically about these three points.

1. Suppose you set up a new habit. Suppose you start for business fifteen minutes earlier and drop into a church on the way. For many people a church can produce at once that atmosphere in which worship is comparatively easy and which is so difficult in a bedroom, particularly when the latter has to be shared. Suppose that when you try with quiet mind to think of Christ actually there before you. Make, if you like, a mental picture of what he would look like if he were in the flesh. Think of yourself bowing before him and of his looking upon you with love and understanding and tenderness. Then tell him of your new quest, how badly you need him. Pour out before him all your known sins, opening your heart to his gaze, seeking his forgiveness. Then, turning your whole need over to him, affirm that his strength is sufficient for you. Let the emphasis henceforth not be on your will, though that will be used to the utmost, but on his friendship and power.

Then keep this up every day. If we are honest, we can all spare fifteen minutes. Don't give it up "because it seems like talking to nothing," or because you do not feel "anyone there," or because some days you feel like throwing it all up. Never mind how you *feel*. Regard it as a discipline at first. Your soul is in training as an athlete trains his body. Don't feel your

muscles every day. There will be many days when you feel that it makes no difference, but Christ, as I think, comes to us below the level of consciousness often, and at that depth he changes our reactions to life. You won't feel "someone there" perhaps except rarely. You will, however, become more kind to others, more loving, more tolerant, more patient, more pure, more serene. Whatever you may or may not notice about yourself, others will take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus.

The sense of immediate Presence, I need to say in all honesty, is not for me a constant experience. One depresses others by not making this clear. As I write this we have just had four days when the sun has scarcely been visible. Yet we have walked in a light far different from the night. To come into the Christian experience is to pass from darkness to light, from night to day. But for me—and I think for many—it is not always blazing sunshine. All kinds of clouds can mediate the sense of presence. Indeed, the mind must give itself to other tasks so that a *conscious* unbroken realization of his immediate presence is impossible and perhaps ought not to be sought.⁴ The times when I have been sure of Christ's *immediate* presence I could count on the fingers of both hands. They were, to me, outstandingly beautiful and deeply moving. Strangely enough, though one took place at the close of a service in my own church, most of them were outside any church. One was an experience of forgiveness in a Y. M. C. A. hut in Mesopotamia when as a young second lieutenant I was a member of a big congregation

⁴ Compare Archbishop Temple, *Christian Faith and Life*, p. 35. Student Christian Movement Press.

crowded into a small space. We sang the hymn, "Christ the Lord Has Risen To-day," and as we lifted up the last "Hallelujah," for me, Jesus was there. Another was in a railway train at Vauxhall Station, when as a young theological student I was on my way to a week-end preaching appointment. Another was on a hill overlooking a reservoir in Charnwood Forest while watching a sunset. Another was in my car hurrying home one November night from an appointment. Another was among the foothills of the Himalayas near Simla. Another was in my own study in the middle of preparing a sermon. Another was in the Lounge at Swanick. These for me have been times when the Sun has shone out in all his splendor. The presence of Christ then has been so real that to lift the head and see a form would not occasion surprise.

But most days there is, rather, the quiet, happy sense of well-being and deep serenity and ableness for anything that has to be faced, and a compassion for others. There is a light to see by.

"Whatever clouds may veil the sky,
Never is night again."

Prayer will be difficult at first. It will be hard to keep the mind from wandering off to other things. Let me suggest ways that have helped me.

(1) Take some of the great hymns which so often we sing without realizing what they contain. Read them over meditatively. Make them your prayer.

(2) Keep a notebook and write out prayers of your own. This keeps the mind on the subject and gradually one makes one's own prayer book. Its subsequent use often brings the joy of a morning of inspiration

and radiance into a dull, gray morning when all the wheels of being are slow.

(3) Use the great manuals of prayer,⁵ taking care to pray and not just to read appreciatively.

(4) Read an incident in the Gospels, imagining yourself present and asking what Jesus would say to *you*. It was Ruskin's method of spiritual meditation to endeavor "to be present as if in the body at each recorded act in the life of the Redeemer."

(5) Praying for others not with a "God bless . . .," but going, imaginatively say, into the sick-room or circumstance with Jesus, thinking that he would wish to do, for, and in the person for whom you pray and then believing that that *is happening*.

(6) A further way is to acknowledge one's greatest need, say the need of a quiet mind in place of the hectic, feverish, restless, worried minds that so many of us have. Then let the mind take hold of that attribute of God which is the opposite of our condition, in this case the peace of God. Then let the mind accept the thought that the second *is replacing* the first; the peace is replacing the restlessness.⁶

2. The second way is not dissimilar; believe in him. When the apostles counseled men to do this, they did not demand that those who were questing should intellectually accept certain propositions *about* him. Did

⁵ *The Temple*, W. E. Orchard. *Altar Stairs*, Joseph Fort Newton. *Prayers for the Social Awakening*, Walter Rauschenbusch. *Prayers*, Francis Greenwood Peabody. *The Throne of Grace*, William A. Quayle. *The Divine Companionship*, John Somervell Hoyland. *The Meaning of Prayer*, Harry Emerson Fosdick. *Service and Prayers for Church and Home*, Wilbur P. Thirkield. *Devotional Services*, John Hunter.

⁶ This is the spirit of Mark 11. 24. Some will call it autosuggestion. I do not quarrel with that label. Such autosuggestion is a kind of prayer. By labeling it autosuggestion we have only named the door through which he comes.

they not mean *trust* him? When you get into a railway train, you trust the engineer to get you to your destination. You don't ask for a proved account of his capabilities and qualifications. You don't pull the emergency cord every few miles because you doubt him. You believe in him *and act as though you did*. If you argue at all, you argue to yourself that thousands of people travel by the 2:30 and are safely delivered every day at the Union Station. I think the appeal of the New Testament is not outraged by this illustration. Like a gold thread through all that appeal run the words, "He is able, he is able." If we could get where we want to be by ourselves, there would be no point in the gospel. But our failures are frequent enough to make us quite despair of getting there ourselves. The glory of the gospel the world over, and that which makes it good news, is that Jesus can do for us and in us what we cannot do for and in ourselves. And the argument underneath this direction of the apostles is that he has done it for them and for countless others. After all, what could be more convincing to-day than to remember the millions on all shores, through all ages, of every kind of temperament and educational standard who have been transformed by Jesus Christ? He has done it for them, I may safely argue, and he can do it for me. *All* the world cannot be wrong. *All* the saints are not deluded. *All* the martyrs are not mad!

3. The third method in a sentence is this: "Come into the fellowship." "Religion is not taught," says Dean Inge, "it is caught." In the first century ordinary men and women with little culture and education were centers of infection. And this glorious infection spread almost through the known world. Paganism

looked on amazed. What was it that these Christians had? At any rate it gave them a sense of tremendous power. "I can do all things," said one, "through him that strengtheneth me."⁷ It gave them joy when there was the least cause for it. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name.⁸ It gave them an inner serenity and peace in the midst of persecution and calamity. They were always talking about peace. It gave them a great love for all, especially those outside the experience of Christ which came to them. They couldn't stop talking about it. They were in a new world of wonder and delight. They might lose their possessions, their health, their loved ones, their very lives. They knew that this new discovery was no insurance against calamity. Rather, the opposite. It brought them right up against it. But they also knew that nothing could rob them of the things Christ had given them. Nothing but willful sin could touch their spirit, or even depress it for long. Nothing could spoil that relationship with God into which he had brought them by that love which for their sake went to die.

It was not dissimilar in the great Methodist Revival. There are characteristic phases in both, of course, which we do not seek to repeat. The early Christians were no doubt influenced partly by the thought of our Lord's speedy return. In the Methodist Revival men were no doubt influenced by the emotion of fear, kindled by pictures of the supposed doom of the impenitent, but, *mutatis mutandis*, the experience was the same. We may pick up one little straw which showed

⁷ Philippians 4. 13.

⁸ Acts 5. 41.

the speed and strength of the current. Many an employer would not employ a Methodist. They were enthusiasts, and the word was one of reproach. A Methodist in the mill wouldn't be satisfied till his pals were "converted." A Methodist kitchen maid would besiege the soul of the cook and drag her to the class meeting.

It is the same now. Not perhaps with the same hilarity, but with the authentic marks of reality. If I were asked the quickest way of bringing a man into the experience of Christ about which we are writing, I should say, "Take him to the nearest Oxford Group Meeting or *live* Methodist Fellowship." There must be many other ways, but of these two I can speak with experience from within. I am afraid also that there are many churches with no such spiritual nucleus. If so, they will speedily pass to the limbo of forgotten things. There are certainly many congregations which do not give a visiting preacher the sense that they are a fellowship of radiant men and women who in Christ have found the secret of the art of living, a secret that half escapes through their handclasp and through the shining of their eyes; men and women who would infect others, producing in others that longing that says, "I would give anything to be like that." This does not mean that in such churches there is no life at all but that it has sunk so low that it ceases to be communicable. Indeed, this is the curse of our church life to-day and the reason of our failure in the world.

If, then, in your church there is no such living and real fellowship, start one. I have seen very humble people start a fellowship with two or three and that One other always available. Others with the same longings

have asked to join. In time the whole church has been aflame with the fire of a new spirit, and other churches in the vicinity have caught fire also.

The greatest need of the church and the world is that His life should flow through ours yet more and more fully until we become all that he can make us; until the whole earth is full of his glory.

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

CHAPTER I INCARNATION

1. What is the "Christmas message"?
2. Is the virgin birth an essential of Christian belief?
3. When we worship at the manger-cradle, do we worship a divine Child or a Child who became divine?
4. What do you mean by "incarnation"?
5. Are we all incarnations of God? How do we differ from Jesus?
6. Was Christ's divinity achieved or endowed, or both?
7. "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." What does this mean?

CHAPTER II BOYHOOD

1. What sort of questions do you think Jesus asked the rabbis when he sat at their feet?
2. The following is taken from the *Evangelium Thomæ*:
"Then he made clay and molded twelve sparrows. His playmates went and told Joseph how he was profaning the Sabbath, and Joseph remonstrated with him; whereupon the Child clapped his hands and shouted to the sparrows—'Away,' and off they flew twittering. . . . Again as he was passing through a village he was jostled by a boy. This angered him, and he said, 'Thou shalt not go thy way,' and the boy fell down and died."

If these stories had been included in the Gospels, would you accept or reject them? Why? Does your reason include a sound principle of criticism?

3. It has been said: "We are so inoculated with small doses of Christianity that we can't catch it. We are familiar with

its jargon and so we miss its experiences." Discuss this, and in the light of your answers say whether a Christian home is an asset or a liability. But what is a Christian home?

4. Discuss the vexed question of family prayers.

CHAPTER III

BUSINESS

1. "Everyman's work can be thought of as a divine vocation." Discuss this.
2. "A man's business or profession should be his first contribution to the kingdom of God." Discuss this.
3. Discuss the interim and ultimate will of God (p. 71).
4. On what principle do you decide what is and is not "a waste of time"?
5. Do we become irritable when we are interrupted? Why?
6. What would you say to a man who thought of his business merely as a means of making money?
7. What is Jesus' word to those who are unhappy at home? Is there any principle on which they should decide whether to leave or stay?
8. Mr. Alexander Irvine, in *The Teachers World*, had an article quoted in *Public Opinion*, December 31, 1920, relating how a speaker at a dinner given to a hundred and fifty graduates criticized education by taking up one thing after another, the tablecloth, pottery, carpets, rugs, and so on, and showing the labor which each entailed. Not one of them in the room, he said, could produce one of them. They were not taught to create with their hands; they were even taught to consider themselves superior to those who did.

"I want to point out to you that the highest form of culture and refinement known to mankind was ultimately associated with tools and labor. In order to do that I must present to you a picture, imaginative, but in accord with the facts of history and experience."

"He pushed his chair back, and stood a few feet from the table. His face betrayed deep emotion. His voice became wonderfully soft and irresistibly appealing. The college

men had been interested; they were now spellbound. He raised his hand, and went through the motions of drawing aside a curtain.

"Gentlemen," he said, "may I introduce to you a young Galilæan who is a master builder—Jesus of Nazareth!"

"It was a weird act. The silence became oppressive. As if addressing an actual person of flesh and blood, he continued:

"Master, may I ask you, as I asked these young men, whether there is anything in this room that you could make with your hands as other men make them?"

"There was a pause, a brief moment or two, then with the slow, measured stride of an Oriental he went to the end of the table, and took the tablecloth in his hand, and made bare the corner and carved oak leg of the great table. In that position he looked into the faces of the men and said: 'The Master says, "Yes, I could make the table—I am a carpenter!"'"

Consider this and say whether you think all men and women should be taught some form of manual craft. Discuss the sense of values by which we have come to look down on manual labor, so that to be an artisan is to be in a lower caste than a professional man; to be a domestic servant is to be in a lower caste than a school-teacher.

CHAPTER IV

BAPTISM

1. Is the sinlessness of Jesus an essential of Christian belief?
2. A group I was once in registered the following conclusion: The absolute sinlessness of Jesus is not an essential of Christian belief. The group believes that Jesus progressed and never at any stage chose evil in the face of good, though his perception of later good may have involved his seeing earlier acts as sin. They were not sins in the light he had then, but may have been in the light he had later. Do you agree? Give reasons.
3. Jesus by being baptized either confessed sin as a penitent or else took part in a service which was meaningless and

fruitful of misunderstanding for all who saw it. Is this really a dilemma to which we are driven?

4. When you pray for guidance, do you say, "This is what I want to do. Please help me"? Or do you say, "What wilt thou have me to do?"
5. Is a course more likely to be God's will if it is unpleasant?
6. What is the teaching of the New Testament regarding ambition?

CHAPTER V

TEMPTATION

1. "He was tempted at the point of his power. He was tempted at the point of his instincts. He was tempted at the point of his relationships." Discuss this and provide illustrations from the Gospels.
2. Martineau said, "Sin is the only thing in the universe of which it may truly be said that the more you practice it the less you know its nature." Is it also true to say, then, that the less you practice it the more you know its nature? Apply this to Christ. Did he know more of a sinner's sin than the sinner himself?
3. What should be man's attitude toward wild animals? And what of the hunting of Brother Fox?
4. To get bread is the quest of the animals. To live to themselves is the quest of animal-minded men. So the world is a jungle and selfishness is king. We act as those who believe that everyone should look after himself. Jesus says this won't work. Don't think *first* about what you will eat. Seek first the reign on earth of justice, mercy, honesty and mutual love, and all things necessary will be added. So long as men are content with low life purpose and live like the beasts by bread alone, so long there will be poverty, misery, and war on the earth.

Discuss this paraphrase from Studdert Kennedy.¹ What is the Christian attitude toward wealth?

¹ *The New Man in Christ*, pp. 200-201. Hodder & Stoughton.

5. Give *us* (not me) our daily bread. Is there significance in the word "us"?
6. Should a Christian nation ever resort to armed force?
7. Force and fear have been called two sides of the same thing. Discuss this.

CHAPTER VI

TRAINING

1. How much more did Jesus know than his educated contemporaries—
 - (1) About facts of history and what we should now call science?
 - (2) About life?
 - (3) About the nature of God?
 What governed the more or the less?
2. If Jesus *did* go to college, as Canon Deane suggests, was it inevitable that he should pass his examinations?
3. Do you think he would study on Sundays? Do you defend this practice?
4. Someone has said, "There is no such thing as unselfish ambition." Do you agree? Does a mixed motive spoil a great endeavor?
5. Is there any area of modern life in which Jesus fails to give us the guidance we need?
6. "Gladys Murray will do nothing but grind for her degree. She won't come to Fellowship or go to a dance or the pictures. She comes to church and that's all. She ought, with her gifts, to teach in the Sunday school. She'll get awfully stale, and if she gets the degree, she will have lost her friends. She takes no part in the University social life and does nothing for anyone else."

Discuss Gladys and say what you would advise.

 - (1) Suppose Gladys' people are rich and could give her an extra year if she failed.
 - (2) Suppose they are poor, and at great sacrifice have schemed to give her this one opportunity for a degree course.

CHAPTER VII

PREACHING

1. Do you test Jesus by what he is reported to have said, or do you test what he is reported to have said by your conception of him? Where do you get your conception of Jesus?
2. Discuss the place of creeds in Christianity. Do you think creeds should be abolished, or brought up to date, or restated every ten years?
3. "Jesus did not say, 'Follow me' *in vacuo*, as it were. There were intellectual concepts behind his call" (K. Harly Boyns). Discuss this.
4. You cannot be right with God unless your relationships with men are as right as you can make them. Discuss this. Should you *always* make confession to anyone you have wronged?
5. Love never fails. Do you believe this?
 - (1) In a difficult family?
 - (2) In ruling a barbaric people?
6. Did Jesus believe the kingdom of God would come in his lifetime?
7. What is the test of the value of a sermon?

CHAPTER VIII

HEALING

1. Do you think the healing miracles of Jesus were all those of psychogenic disease? Ought we to be able to repeat them now? How?
2. Do you think faith could cure cancer? If you say "Yes," say also how such faith can be generated?
3. Mr. McNair is an educated Scottish Presbyterian with a fine, virile faith in God. Miss Cissie Willans is an uneducated girl with a strong tendency to hysteria and an emotional, sentimental religion. Mr. McNair is not easily convinced without evidence. Miss Willans is highly suggestible and belief comes easy to her. Both are victims of a functional paralysis. Both go to a healing mission. Miss Willans

is cured. Mr. McNair is not. The missionary says it is his lack of faith. Discuss this situation and distinguish between faith, suggestibility, and credulity. What would Jesus have said to McNair?

4. What are the rights and wrongs of Christian Science? Is its vogue due to the fact that we have dropped from our preaching a gospel for the body which the New Testament includes?
5. Jesus said we must have faith. He frequently rebuked men for lack of faith. Compare the tempest on the sea, the case of the epileptic boy (Mark 4. 35-41 and Mark 9. 14-29). Yet if you used faith—I do not mean faith in medical aid—and called it forth in order to heal, would you not by implication decry the value of medical aid? You might be called a crank or a quack. Should you use faith and be called a quack or not use it and disobey Jesus?
6. Is the church committed to a ministry of healing or should it leave it entirely to the doctors?
7. Is confession a method of spiritual healing of mental stress which the church ought to encourage? Do you believe in it? Under what conditions?

CHAPTER IX

MIRACLES

1. If three specialists and your doctor told you that your loved one could not possibly recover, would you still believe in God's power to heal and would you expect a miracle to happen? Would your faith be undermined by the pronouncement of science? Would you pray for the patient with, deep down in your mind, a lurking feeling that it was useless?
2. Do you believe Jesus could have cured—
 - (1) A broken leg in ten seconds?
 - (2) A blind man whose optic nerve had been destroyed?
 Why?
3. If the son of the widow of Nain had been decapitated, could Jesus have raised him from the dead? If you say "No,"

- at what point do you limit the power of Christ? What principle decides you as to where you draw the line?¹
4. Distinguish between supernatural and contranatural. Do we know what is included in the natural?
 5. Has the modern church given up (a) belief in miracles, (b) expectation of miracles? Has it progressed by this attitude or retrogressed and shown itself faithless?
 6. Would the expectation of miracles bring continual depression and disappointment? Would it be better to give up all hope of the miraculous?
 7. Is it harder for God to "intervene" to calm my temper than calm a tempest? Do we make too rigid a distinction between the laws of nature and the laws of the mind?
 8. The following is a list of the miracles. Take one and discuss it, suggesting Modernist interpretations and whether these are adequate, and getting at the significance of the miracle. The following order is taken from Shafto's *Wonders of the Kingdom* (Student Christian Movement Press), which the leader would find useful.
- Water into Wine—John 2. 1-11.
 Stilling the Storm—Mark 4. 35-41; Matthew 8. 23-27; Luke 8. 22-25.
 Walking on the Lake—Mark 6. 45-52; Matthew 14. 22-33; John 6. 15-21.
 Feeding the Multitude—Mark 6. 30-44; Matthew 14. 13-21; Luke 9. 10-17; John 6. 1-14.
 Withered Fig Tree—Mark 11. 12-14; Matthew 21. 18-20; Luke 13. 6-9.
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The Possessed Man in the Synagogue—Mark 1. 23-28; Luke 4. 33-37.

The Gerasene Demoniac—Mark 5. 1-20; Matthew 8. 28-34; Luke 8. 26-39

The Daughter of the Syrophenician Woman—Mark 7. 24-30; Matthew 15. 21-28.

¹ Note that the only miracle of cure after amputation is described by Luke who was a doctor (Luke 22. 49-53). The other evangelists describe the incident of the ear being cut off but not the cure (Matthew 26. 51-53; Mark 14. 47-48; John 18. 10-11).

The Epileptic Boy—Mark 9. 14-29; Matthew 17. 14-21; Luke 9. 37-43.

The Dumb and Blind Demoniac—Matthew 9. 32-33; 12. 22; Luke 11. 14.

The Deaf Man With Impediment—Mark 7. 32-37.

The Blind Man of Bethsaida—Mark 8. 22-26.

Blind Bartimæus—Mark 10. 46-52; Matthew 20. 29-34; Luke 18. 35-43.

The Man Born Blind—John 9. 1-41.

The Woman With the Spirit of Infirmary—Luke 13. 10-17.

The Man With Dropsy—Luke 14. 1-6.

The Sick Man at the Pool—John 5. 1-16.

Peter's Mother-in-Law—Mark 1. 29-31; Matthew 8. 14-15; Luke 4. 38-39.

The Woman With Hemorrhage—Mark 5. 25-34; Matthew 9. 20-22; Luke 8. 43-48.

The Paralytic at Capernaum—Mark 2. 1-12; Matthew 9. 1-8; Luke 5. 18-26.

The Man With the Withered Hand—Mark 3. 1-6; Matthew 12. 9-14; Luke 6. 6-11.

The Centurion's Servant—Matthew 8. 5-13; Luke 7. 1-10.

The Nobleman's Son—John 4. 46-54.

The Cleansing of the Leper—Mark 1. 40-45; Matthew 8. 1-4; Luke 5. 12-14.

The Ten Lepers—Luke 17. 11-19.

The Ear of the High Priest's Servant—Luke 22. 49-53; compare Matthew 26. 51-53; Mark 14. 47-48; John 18. 10-11.

The Raising of Jairus' Daughter—Mark 5. 21-24, 35-43; Matthew 9. 18-19, 23-26; Luke 8. 40-42, 49-56.

The Raising at Nain—Luke 7. 11-17.

The Raising of Lazarus—John 11. 1-44.

CHAPTER X

TRANSFIGURATION

1. Discuss the means by which Jesus *knew* that his road led to the cross.
2. Do you think he was conscious of the light which illumined

his face and garments? Compare Moses (Exod'is 34. 29). Have you any explanations to offer?

3. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle describes the transfiguration in terms of spiritualism. He speaks¹ of the "materialization of the two prophets upon the mountain" and says that Peter, James, and John "formed the psychic circle" through which the miracles were done. He adds: "Then there is the choice of the high, pure air of the mountain, the drowsiness of the attendant mediums,² the transfiguring, the shining robes, the cloud, the words, 'Let us make three tabernacles,' with its alternate reading, 'Let us make three booths or cabinets' (the ideal way of condensing power and producing materializations). All these make a very consistent theory of the nature of the proceedings." Discuss these quotations.
4. Later in his book³ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle says: "The list of gifts which Saint Paul gives as being necessary for the Christian disciple is simply the list of gifts of a very powerful medium (1 Corinthians 12. 8-11). . . . The early Christian Church was saturated with spiritualism." Discuss this and say whether you think modern spiritualism has made, is making, or will make any valuable contribution to our thought about life and death.
5. May a Christian engage in spiritualistic practices?
6. What communion, if any, should we have with the dead? For example, by meditation about them, by prayer for them, by conversation with them through thought only; through a medium. Is there an important difference between communion and communication?
7. What is the inner meaning *for us* of the story of the transfiguration?

CHAPTER XI

TRIUMPH

1. Read again Percy Arnsworth's poem beginning, "My garden has roses red." Will the roses of pain and of joy seem equally sweet at last?

¹ *The New Revelation*, p. 79. Hodder & Stoughton.

² But note Luke 9. 32, "When they were fully awake."

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 80.

2. Have we moderns lost our sense of sin?
3. Have we ceased to believe in hell? If not, what do we mean by "hell"?
4. What would you say a man is who is indifferent to religion, who "has no use for it," and "feels no need for it"?
5. Is there a place for the appeal to fear?

CHAPTER XII

SACRAMENT

1. Imagine the thoughts of Peter, the impulsive man of action, and of John, the quiet mystic, on the walk from the Upper Room to Gethsemane.
2. What is the answer to the man who absents himself from holy communion on the grounds of unworthiness?
3. Do you think that all who love Jesus Christ and wish to follow his way of life should be welcomed to communion, or should access to the table be denied? If the latter, to whom and on what grounds? Would Jesus himself approve such a denial?
4. Would you receive the elements in holy communion if they were administered by a saintly layman or woman? Give reasons in either case.
5. Why is this source called a sacrament?
6. Why is this sacrament regarded as the central act of Christian worship?

Compare Andrews, C. F., *What I Owe to Christ*, pp. 168ff.

CHAPTER XIII

AGONY

1. Was the cross the will of God? In what sense?
2. (a) Was Judas a pawn in a game that had to be played because it was predestined? (b) Was he a traitor through and through? (c) Was he a man in whom impatience has gone mad and who tried to force the hand of Jesus?
3. Were the sins which brought Jesus to the cross unusual sins

- or were they the sins of people like ourselves? What were they?
4. Would you have run away?
 5. Do you defend Peter's use of his sword? Did you give the same answer in 1914?
 6. Discuss the place of pity in our attitude toward Jesus. A card recently was published with a portrait of Christ wearing the crown of thorns. Underneath were the words: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" Would Jesus seek to win men in this way?
 7. "It is not what happens to us that matters. What matters is our reaction to what happens to us." Discuss this.

CHAPTER XIV

DEATH

1. Try to enter the mind of a devout follower of Jesus on the night of the crucifixion. How far would he get in his thinking?
2. In the communion service we use the words "sacrifice," "oblation," and "satisfaction" for the sins of the whole world. Would you retain these words? In what sense?
3. Discuss the words "substitution" and "propitiation" in the same way.
4. He died for me. In what sense are these words true? A man says: "How could he? *I* did not cause his death. I hadn't committed any sins. I should not have suffered any penalty if he had not died. How can the sins of others be transferred to him?" It is possible. If possible, it would be unjust. How can one man bear the sins of the world? I forgive my child when he is penitent. Why does God demand a bloody murder before he can forgive his own children? If his purpose in redemption was foreseen, why couldn't he get his results in another way and avoid the suffering of Christ?
5. What is the relation of the cross to forgiveness? Did not Jesus forgive men in the days of his flesh? Did not the psalmist find forgiveness?

6. What did Jesus accomplish by his death? Do you think it is sufficient to regard it as a martyrdom?
7. What reason have we for believing that in some sense Jesus identified himself with humanity?

CHAPTER XV RESURRECTION

1. Is belief in the *physical* resurrection of Christ an essential of Christian faith?
2. "I believe in the resurrection of the body." Do you? In what sense? Do you believe that the particles of your flesh will ever be reassembled? If not, ought you to say that you believe in the resurrection of the body?
3. Where did Jesus get the clothes in which he appeared to Mary?
4. What exactly was "the evidence of the graveclothes"?
5. Is there any reason for supposing that because Jesus survived death we shall do the same?
6. Do you believe in personal immortality for all? Why?
7. Do you think psychical science and spiritualism will contribute to our understanding of the resurrection?
8. Can we really say that Jesus is near us every day? Are there conditions on our side? What are they?

CHAPTER XVI ASCENSION

1. Make a list of the appearances of Jesus after death and state the significance of anything you discover which is common to all.
2. Why did Jesus never appear to his enemies?
3. Read through Jean Ingelow's poem beginning, "And didst thou love the race that loved not thee," and state the message in ordinary language.
4. What great essential of faith did belief in the Second Coming keep alive? Is it necessary for this purpose? Did Christ believe that, in the lifetime of the disciples, he would

return in power and glory after the ascension? Was he mistaken?

5. Does Jesus appear to men now? Are there conditions? If so, what are they?
6. Will Jesus remain forever human? Shall we?
7. Can we suppose that our values will ultimately be vindicated? Does love ever fail?

CHAPTER XVII

ENTHRONEMENT

1. Make a list of the advantages of civilized life which can be directly traced to Jesus.
2. What should be the attitude of a wealthy Christian toward slums? Is it sin to see the slums and do nothing?
3. "War is greater atheism than any refusal to believe in an intellectual concept" (p. 319). Do you agree? Is war ever justifiable?
4. Do the churches generally act as an anodyne, giving comfort and relief but not forcing men to face the challenge of the world's need?
5. What do we really mean by saying that Christ's spirit would solve all our problems? Is it impracticable to suggest this?
6. Will Christ win at last? Do we hope he will or are we sure? What are the grounds for our opinion?
7. Life will only work one way, and that is God's way. Discuss this—
 - (1) Nationally and internationally.
 - (2) Socially and industrially.
 - (3) Individuality.

CHAPTER XVIII

AVAILABILITY

1. What is your answer to the man who says, "When I do come to church, I don't get anything that makes it worth while coming"?

2. Discuss the difference between looking for Christ and looking for an experience of him.
3. When Jesus "comes alive" for you, will you know it? How?
4. Is a Christian home an advantage or a disadvantage? How?
5. What are the marks of an authentic Christian experience?
6. "Christ cannot be found everywhere until he has been found somewhere." Discuss this.
7. Make a list of the occasions when you have been sure of Christ's presence. How do you know you were not deceived?
8. What is the matter with your church? What are you doing about it?

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